THE BOOK WAS DRENCHED

GETTING THINGS DONE IN BUSINESS

The quality of the materials used in the manufacture of this book is governed by continued postwar shortages.

GETTING THINGS DONE IN BUSINESS

BY

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GETTING THINGS DONE IN BUSINESS

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To

P.M. AND B.B.W.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The National Emergency arising from the new World War focused attention as never before on the vital importance of getting things done in business and demonstrated once more that the best of planning will be thrown badly off schedule and perhaps go for naught unless productive organizations are prepared to get their plans carried out—completely, efficiently, and on time.

The second edition of *Getting Things Done in Business*, like the first, presents a successful technique for making more certain that plans, programs, and ideas will be put into effect. This edition, however, goes further by showing that, to ensure proper performance, everyone involved, from the head of the organization down, must give full and continued attention to the problem. Otherwise, production lags, precious time is wasted, and opportunities are lost.

The examples and incidents used to clarify the suggestions in this book are taken mainly from the fields of selling and distribution. Basically, however, the principles apply equally to the field of production. Men and women respond to the same fundamental appeals whether they are engaged in

building tanks and planes or in selling chewing gum and typewriters. Results are most satisfactory when workers are so directed that they willingly and spontaneously give their best efforts to the task at hand.

Moreover, subordinates whose work is guided in accordance with the principles of sound, constructive leadership pay less attention to destructive outside influences. A high percentage of the costly disputes between workers and management over wages and various technicalities is directly traceable to an underlying dissatisfaction arising from ineffective and unenlightened leadership. The pages which follow contain a tested recipe for creating a smoother, more friendly, and more responsive relationship between management and subordinates, as well as a flexible technique for getting things done.

EVERETT B. WILSON.

WASHINGTON, D.C.,
November, 1941.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

American Industrial management in 1937 was confronted for the first time on a broad scale with the "sit-down" strike, a physical impasse in labor relationships which was both spectacular and costly. Quite naturally, the "sit-downs" got immediate and preferred attention from everyone concerned, particularly the top executives of industry.

Yet in every factory and store, among office workers and salesmen, much more costly "sit-downs" have been going on for a hundred years—*mental sit-downs*.

As long as men have worked for pay, a very great many of them have been refusing and failing to do the job assigned to them in the way they should do it. Commands to do thus and so have met with mental sit-downs which have been just as effective in blocking production and sales as any physical sit-down that ever stopped an assembly line.

Unfortunately, there is nothing spectacular about the mental sit-downs. Business staggers along in spite of them. But if every mental sit-down could be visualized by management, it would

astound a good many executives who have been complacent about their leadership.

That is one reason why this book should be useful to any man whose job is to get other men to do their work right. It should visualize for him what causes mental sit-downs and what to do about them.

Personnel is costing more and more. Management is confronted with the problem of making it worth what it costs. That demands more intelligent leadership and better understanding of how to get men to do things—which is exactly what the author is talking about.

The greatest recommendation that this book can have for practical men is that it has been written out of the day's work. Mr. Wilson's principal occupation for a good many years has been concerned with getting men to do things—and like it. What he writes on this subject deserves the immediate and preferred attention of everybody who appreciates the menace and cost of the mental sit-down.

CRAIG DAVIDSON.

DETROIT, MICH.,
July, 1937.

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Chapter I

IDEAS AND PROFITS

Business places a high value on new ideas for making profits. Men who can devise those new plans command large salaries and great respect. Yet in most organizations new ideas are by no means the most urgent need. There is another readily available source of extra profits open to every concern—the old tested fundamental ideas that have proved so profitable for some businesses year after year.

There is nothing wrong with a new idea, provided it is sound and practical, but too many brand-new plans are superficial stunts that furnish only a temporary stimulant. On the other hand, the old, basic ideas which are so widely disregarded because they lack the glamour of newness and the appeal of originality may be the means of lifting an entire organization to a higher level of success and profit.

Most concerns have tried to use those ideas at some time in the past. Some of the fundamentals have been taken up and then discarded because they didn't work out. However, nine times out of

ten the fault was not in the plan itself, but in the way it was executed. Millions of dollars have been wasted by business organizations in promoting and financing excellent ideas from which no profit was realized because the plans in question were carried out ineffectually or not at all.

Countless organizations—chain store concerns, oil companies, department stores, restaurants, and others—have embarked on ambitious campaigns to capture a greater share of the consumer's dollar by means of improved service-to-the-customer, only to get nowhere for the simple reason that the campaigns were ineffective. Yet every executive whose profits lie in attracting retail customers knows that others have met with success in such campaigns and that there is no better way to build up larger and more profitable sales.

Other concerns, collectively, have spent many millions more on advertising campaigns, the success of which depended on full cooperation of the sales force. But the huge advertising expenditures accomplished little because dealers didn't have the merchandise or the necessary coupons or the information needed to carry out the programs to a successful conclusion. The sales forces fell down on the job and nullified the advertising effort.

Scores of companies have spent large sums on employee-training programs without realizing more than a fraction of the benefits that the training

could have produced. The error was that the proved and successful methods advocated in the training programs were never used to any important extent.

A wholesale food distributor found, after careful checking, that one of the easiest and surest ways of getting an order from a retailer was to have his salesmen check to find what items the dealers needed before trying to get the order. A truck manufacturer learned that the most likely way to make a sale was to find which of the prospect's trucks were becoming old, learn what sort of work those trucks were performing, and then demonstrate that a new truck could do the same work for less money. A retail bakery chain proved that the most successful way to sell surplus goods that might become stale and unsalable was to hold out the item when trying to sell it, in order that the customer might see and inspect it.

Dozens of these "secrets" are well known, but knowing them does little or no good because the companies are not able to put them into actual practice. The food salesmen persist in asking the futile question, "What do you need today?" instead of looking to see what the dealer needs. Truck salesmen continue warming their heels in buyers' offices asking, "When are you going to buy a new truck?" instead of proving the need for new equipment. Clerks in bakeries keep on saying, "Do you

need any sweet rolls?" instead of showing the customer the goods she is being invited to purchase.

Usually these organizations spend a great amount of time and energy explaining the merits of the ideas to their employees. Meetings are held, booklets are printed, pep talks are given, but all to no avail. The subordinates, or most of them, continue in their old and settled ways. Typically, a few employees adopt the new plan and use it profitably, while most of the employees use some small part of the program, but the company falls far short of getting the new idea generally adopted.

When these potentially profitable ideas fail to bring the desired results, many executives shrug their shoulders and set out to find some newer and better plan that will work more successfully. But the trouble is that the next idea is likely to fail or fall below expectations for the same reason. Indeed, most new ideas produce disappointing results, in that the net gain is considerably less than it could and should be. Every executive will grant that to be the case. And likewise, successful and experienced business leaders will agree with this important conclusion:

Inability to get plans, instructions, and ideas carried out is the biggest single reason why individuals and whole organizations fail in business.

There is scarcely one unsuccessful business organization in existence that could not improve its

profits greatly by learning how to make certain old, reliable, well-proved business fundamentals work. It is equally safe to say that even the most successful concerns could improve their profits by getting better results with certain sound, basic ideas that have not been carried out to the extent that they could be.

Learning how to get things done could not have saved manufacturers of horsedrawn buggies from a big drop in sales, nor could it have prevented the virtual disappearance of men's high button shoes. But nineteen out of twenty business failures are due to inability to apply the time-tested fundamentals of management, rather than to an actual lack of capital or to the other reasons usually cited.

Since the inability to get good ideas carried out is the most common reason why executives experience difficulty in business, the first logical step is to determine the cause for their difficulties. Careful analysis shows that, regardless of whoever else may share the responsibility, the failure is at least partly the fault of the executive himself—the man in charge of seeing that the ideas are adopted, the man who believes in them and wants to see them used.

Now and then an organization will take hold of an idea enthusiastically with little or no need of help from above, but those instances are exceptional. For the most part, getting a plan adopted

requires close attention from the executive in charge. That individual may be the president of the company, a vice-president, department head, branch-office manager, or anyone else. If he is the executive in charge of all the individuals on whom the success of the plan depends, he is the individual who is responsible if the plan fails.

It is not necessary to examine any great number of cases to learn the most common reasons why plans and ideas fail, so far as the top executive is concerned. Three reasons stand out:

1. Lack of personal support by the executive.
2. Lack of coordination in the organization.
3. Lack of ability among lower executives.

When a sales program fails, the plan may be faulty. When a training program fails, the plan may be unsound. But more often than not, there is nothing particularly wrong with the plan. The real trouble is that the executive in charge has overlooked some of the vital factors on which the success of the idea depends.

The Need for Executive Support

Too many executives are content to introduce ideas and then forget about them. They fall into this error for two reasons. The first of the reasons is the naïve assumption that because the plan sounds good it will work, without further support.

The president of a bakery makes a tour of retail outlets and reaches the conclusion that sales are unsatisfactory because the route men have been lax in picking up stale bread and rolls, with the result that customers are buying stale merchandise and assuming it is inferior in quality.

Convinced that this is a matter of extreme importance, he calls his staff together, explains what he has learned, and lays out a program designed to eliminate the evil. The vice-president, sales manager, and other executives agree that the president is right. Having done his part, as he thinks, the president turns his mind to other matters, assuming that the idea will be adopted because it is a good one and he has endorsed it.

He leaves the success of the plan to the sales manager. However, that executive has other matters on his mind and gives little attention to the stale-bread problem. As a result, the route men continue to leave stale bread in the stores, and the company continues to lose sales because of dissatisfied customers.

The president did not realize that no plan he advances can be counted on to succeed unless he himself continues to give it his personal support after the idea is first introduced. Some few ideas will go over without further attention, but they are the exceptions. It doesn't pay to take chances.

It has never occurred to some executives that

their plans may be completely disregarded, after everyone has agreed that the ideas are sound and no objections have been voiced. The bakery president very likely would ridicule anyone who told him that his route men were doing nothing whatever to correct the stale-bread trouble. Yet unless he takes the trouble to find out and to give his plan further support, that is exactly what is likely to happen.

Another reason which executives frequently advance as an excuse for not giving more attention to their ideas is that they are too busy. And they mean that sincerely. Many executives, especially those at or near the top of an organization, have twice as much to do as their time will permit them to get done. Outside activities, such as board meetings, civic organizations, and speech making take much of the time of some executives. Others devote a good share of their time to searching for new ideas or to performing time-consuming details that any well-trained clerk could handle.

Yet few executive duties are more vital than seeing to it that good ideas actually are put into use. Making certain that waitresses are courteous and efficient, that salesmen use effective selling methods, or that store clerks are accurate and fair with customers is much more important than any speech an executive might deliver before a convention and will return more profit than can

be gained by going on an outing with a group of civic associates. The problem is one for the executive to decide for himself. If he takes his attention away from the plans he is trying to put over, he must expect them to work out unsatisfactorily.

The coach of a college football team is in much the same position as an executive in business. His job is to see that his team wins as many games as possible, just as the executive is responsible for seeing that the company makes as large a profit as it is entitled to make. The coach selects his players and gives them their plays, just as the executive picks out his assistants and employees and then furnishes ideas to make the concern successful. But, unlike so many executives, the football coach does not stop there. He goes several steps further by drilling his men over and over again on fundamentals, holding practice scrimmage to develop coordination and teamwork, and then reviewing the plays and signals with blackboard talks. Every coach has learned what many executives do not realize, and that is that his team cannot be expected to function properly and make full use of its potential ability unless these preliminaries are gone through. And when the day of the game arrives, the coach does not leave everything up to the players, or even to the captain. He could make himself useful by selling tickets or going downtown to help his wife buy the groceries, but he doesn't.

Instead, he sits on the bench, follows every play tensely, analyzes the weaknesses of his own team and of the opponents, and sees to it in person that his squad plays the best football of which they are capable.

The employees in the average organization, without support from the executive, handle an important idea just about as well as a football team would execute a set of intricate plays in the absence of repeated drilling and personal attention from the coach. Without fairly close attention from the executive, few plans develop as they should.

CHAPTER II

ENSURING COORDINATION

Coordination is as necessary in a business organization as in a symphony orchestra, a gasoline engine, or a ballet. Without it, profits are sure to suffer and ideas are bound to fail. Yet there is less coordination among the executives of most business concerns than in the poorest of orchestras, largely because its importance is not so fully appreciated and its absence is not so noticeable.

It is this lack of coordination that sabotages many a plan that promises rich results. The plan fails because key executives fail to do their parts. A big sales campaign, no matter how sure-fire it looks, cannot succeed if the buyer is late is securing the necessary raw materials, if the advertising manager prepares ineffective copy, or if the sales manager fails to stimulate his sales force.

These breakdowns occur time and again in most business concerns and will continue to handicap those organizations until the executives in charge take steps to ensure coordination. Lack of coordination is due ordinarily to one of these three causes:

1. Personal antagonism.
2. Lack of interest.
3. Conflict of ideas.

Causes for Antagonism

Some organizations are big, happy families. Others, making up the majority, are not. The antagonism may be, and usually is, well below the surface and concealed from the executive in charge, but human nature is such that it pays to suspect that this element may be present until there is good reason to believe that it is not. For when two department heads or executives on whom the chief executive must depend for the success of his plan are antagonistic toward each other, the plan is very likely to fail.

The reasons behind the antagonism are numerous. Jealousy is a common cause. The advertising manager may feel that the sales manager has been benefited by favoritism, he may envy the latter's larger salary or fear that the plan will give the sales manager too much prestige. Any of these causes may influence the advertising man to lie down on the job.

On the other hand, two department heads may be on unfriendly terms because one suspects the other of having taken advantage of him in the past. The buyer may think the promotion manager stole one of his ideas. He may harbor a grudge

against the office manager because the latter ridiculed him publicly. The credit manager may be convinced that the sales manager has been complaining about him to the head of the company. Then, when a batch of new accounts is presented for approval, the credit manager leans over backward to be critical and spoil a few sales.

Fear of being overshadowed, jealousy of a fellow executive's success, or resentment over having his own ideas rejected has caused many an executive to lie down on a plan that required his full support. When that happens, the plan is certain to fail.

In all fairness, it should be admitted that executives and department heads seldom sabotage an idea deliberately, merely because it was originated by, or will reflect credit on, some other executive whom they dislike, but jealousy and antagonism can warp a man's good judgment and involuntarily cause him to relax his efforts toward making the plan a success.

The executive who is on the lookout for these personal situations can usually detect them sooner or later and will experience more success with his plans and policies when he has smoothed them out.

Lack of Interest

Newly introduced plans often require the participation of various department heads to whom the idea means nothing but extra work. They and

their departments will receive no special credit for the success of the plan and therefore take no interest in it, especially if they feel that it won't work or think that it isn't worth the trouble. In such cases, they may give the idea only halfhearted support or may neglect completely to do the part assigned them.

On the other hand, some executives may consider the idea entirely worth while and yet fail to support it because they don't like the way it's being done. For example, if a sales manager thinks that the new advertising campaign is ineffective or poorly executed, he is less likely to make sure that dealers are well stocked and fully informed about the campaign than he would be if he were thoroughly "sold" on the type of advertising being run.

In a chain store organization, the industrial-relations department prepared a thorough and elaborate training program for store managers and supervisors. The program was approved by the president and all other executives. Yet because the head of the operating department, who had not been consulted in detail, was not thoroughly familiar with the training that was proposed, he failed to give the program proper support. Branch managers, sensing his lack of interest, claimed that the plan would interfere with their everyday store operations, and the program finally had to be withdrawn.

The letdown in support need by no means be a conscious one. A department head may relax his efforts without realizing that he is doing so, merely because the idea does not hold sufficient interest for him. In addition, an executive may fail to do his part simply because he doesn't fully understand what is expected of him. When he doesn't know or misunderstands any important detail of the over-all plan, he can't very well carry out his share of the program.

Conflict with Other Work

Even when he has the best of intentions, an executive may upset a company-wide plan because it interferes with his other work. An office manager who is having trouble breaking in a number of new employees to take care of the everyday routine is all too likely to be late in preparing special reports needed to keep up interest in a sales campaign. An advertising manager engaged in preparing an advertising budget for the coming year may quite unwittingly be slow in supplying the dealer with material needed to stage an anniversary sale.

Any or all of these factors may be responsible for the lack of coordination that wrecks the chances of a new idea or the adoption of a policy fundamental to the success of an organization. It is up to the executive in charge to guard against any

lack of harmony or cooperation that might stand in the way of a plan. The technique of getting cooperation from other executives in carrying out ideas and policies is essentially the same as the one used with subordinates and is discussed fully in the following chapters. The principal point to be emphasized here is that the executives and department heads may be fully as responsible as subordinates when an idea fails.

Executives sometimes overlook the fact that their staff assistants may not be doing their part. They often take it for granted that other executives are completely and unmistakably interested in the welfare of the company, and too capable to allow jealousy or lack of interest to prevent their doing their full part. Yet the truth is that just as much care must be used in presenting plans to executives and department heads as is used in presenting the ideas to subordinates.

In summary, no idea has much of a chance of success in any organization, unless the executive takes pains to see that the whole executive staff is working together.

Chapter III

MAKING SURE EXECUTIVES MEASURE UP

The head of a company who acknowledges the importance of getting things done will make certain that his executive staff is composed of men who are able to get results with ideas and plans. Yet this qualification is frequently overlooked.

When the time comes to select a new department head, the first qualifications considered when the various candidates are discussed usually are their experience and their success as subordinates. How long has he been with us? How did he compare with others as a salesman or store manager?

Those questions are asked about each man and, in a majority of cases, the man with the longer service and the superior sales results is the one finally selected for management responsibility, despite the fact that he may have no other qualifications for the new job.

Experience and past accomplishment unquestionably are extremely important. Until a man has learned the rudiments of the business and demonstrated some degree of proficiency as a

subordinate, he may lack the foundation needed to develop into a good executive or supervisor. However, there are other factors to be considered.

In the first place, what sort of experience has the man had? Many years of service do not tell the whole story. There is no reason whatever to assume that because a man has spent ten years cutting meat behind a counter, he will make a good executive of a meat department. Even if he were the best meat cutter on record, he might make a rather sad executive. Cutting meat and running a department are two different jobs. If a man has never had other people working under him, he may be totally unfitted for management, no matter how excellent his record may have been or how extensive his experience.

Moreover, failure to rank high as a subordinate need not necessarily disqualify a man for consideration as an executive. The best salesmen on the entire force might well fail as sales managers, while some individual who had built up a mediocre record as a salesman, perhaps because of his dislike for that particular sort of selling, might be an outstanding success at directing the efforts of other men.

Ability to succeed as an executive demands various qualities that may be entirely missing in even the most successful subordinates. Among those qualities are:

Intelligence. This qualification might well be restated as ability to think and to reason things out, a valuable if not indispensable asset in an executive of any kind. In most types of selling, a good sales manager requires considerably more intelligence than a good salesman. A supervisor must exercise more judgment than a store manager.

Intelligence usually is the combined product of both education and experience, although some individuals acquire an amazing amount of intelligence from experience and observation alone. However, in selecting executives who are to deal with subordinates and be responsible for getting ideas carried out, it pays to be especially careful about choosing men who have had little formal schooling.

Knowledge of Human Nature. Ability to understand and get along with other people is essential to anyone who is to direct the work of subordinates. No amount of hard work or innate brilliance will make up for a lack of understanding. A subordinate who has trouble getting cooperation from others, or who is disliked, is hardly qualified to manage other people successfully.

Openmindedness. Willingness to consider and adopt the ideas of others also is highly important. Openmindedness is especially necessary when it comes to helping other departments execute their ideas. Stubbornness on the part of a few executives

has been responsible for the failure of many first-rate ideas in large concerns.

Determination. Getting difficult ideas adopted calls for an unusual amount of determination. Anyone who is easily discouraged is sure to have poor success instructing others.

Interest in Management. A good many men have no desire to undertake management responsibilities. Some lack confidence in themselves; others sense that as subordinates they will come out better in the long run. This is especially true among salesmen. They like selling better than managing. Their everyday contacts with the public and the lift they get from closing difficult sales mean much more to them than the privilege of sitting behind a desk and guiding the efforts of others.

Some individuals will accept promotions merely because they know their futures may be prejudiced if they reject the opportunities, and thus assume management positions when they really have no desire to undertake the new work. For that reason it is well to make sure a man really wants a promotion before elevating him to an executive position.

Poise. Lack of poise is a real handicap to any executive. Without this characteristic, an executive has trouble dealing with his subordinates and finds it difficult to get cooperation from other executives. A man need not necessarily look and

act like an executive, but it certainly helps to possess those advantages.

Various other executive qualities might well be mentioned, but the foregoing are the ones that are too often overlooked when the time comes to select an executive who is to play a part in getting plans carried out. And the executives who are chosen without regard for these fundamental qualifications are often responsible for the failure of an organization's most important plans and policies.

Providing an Executive Background

Since most concerns prefer to promote from within, both in fairness to subordinates and to provide an incentive for employees, it is necessary to make sure that the organization contains a sufficient number of men with potential executive abilities. One way to make sure of this is to hire such men deliberately from time to time, even though it may be necessary to pay them somewhat more than the usual rate until they can be promoted. Another, and more practical method, especially in small concerns, is to see that the more promising men and those on whom the promotions are most likely to fall receive a suitable type of training before the time comes to advance them. In large companies it is possible and profitable to form executive training classes in which

future executives can be given the right sort of background, through discussion and by other means. In smaller concerns where any sort of set program is not feasible, promising men can be aided in developing executive ability in other ways:

Encourage them to join executive groups. Joining the better civic and business clubs and attending conventions are ways to help young men develop executive characteristics. Not only do they have an opportunity to study and mingle with other executives, but they also gain a sense of importance and a helpful fund of broadening information.

Interest them in attending school. Analyze their weaknesses and encourage them to attend night school. Courses in public speaking, personnel and labor problems, and so on, are available at many of the colleges and universities and may mean a great deal to young men about to assume executive responsibilities. Additional schooling also will tend to make them more analytical and may encourage them to take themselves and their jobs more seriously.

Suggest helpful reading. There are dozens of good books that will aid younger men. The right sort of reading will make them more thoughtful and open their eyes to the problems of management, even if it doesn't supply all the answers.

Most businessmen have learned through experience that executive ability is none too plentiful in

any organization. They have realized also that many promising young men fall down completely when taken from subordinate positions and, with no preparation, given management responsibility. Yet hundreds of organizations take no steps to correct this handicap.

Getting plans carried out means that the organization must be staffed with as many capable executives as possible, and the executive who insists that the members of his staff have real management ability is certain to have better success in getting his concern to carry out the basic ideas and policies on which the success of the business depends. Until the executive staff is prepared to do its part, subordinates cannot be expected to do theirs.

Chapter IV

WHY RESULTS VARY

After the executive staff has been prepared to give the necessary thought and attention to the problem of getting plans adopted, the next step is to devise ways and means of getting satisfactory results from subordinates.

Everyone can point to outstanding instances of business concerns that have achieved admirable results with instructions and policies. An excellent example has been furnished by telephone operators. The telephone companies train their girls to develop a high degree of patience, courtesy, and self-control. The most irritating and unreasonable users of telephones are almost invariably disposed of tactfully and pleasantly. For that reason, at least, it is regrettable that these girls are being replaced with automatic devices.

Pullman porters likewise have been trained to a remarkable extent. They almost always shine the shoes of passengers, make up berths skillfully, control their tempers when annoyed or insulted,

and perform the other necessary courtesies and duties which accompany their jobs. The same standard of performance is found in other types of business.

Factory workers, as a rule, do a considerably better job of obeying instructions and rules than a group of salesmen or store clerks. The man who is charged with putting on the left rear wheels of the automobiles in the assembly line almost always gets them on. The woman who trims hats in the third-floor shop can be relied on to put the feather on the hat and to put on a green one if told to do so. If she is instructed to stop putting on green feathers and to use red ones instead, she usually does that, too, without fail.

This better regard for instructions in such cases is not, however, entirely the result of superior leadership methods on the part of executives. For experience has demonstrated clearly that difficulty in getting instructions executed depends largely on the nature of the job and on the supervision.

Nature of Work. Instructions always are better observed on regular, repetitive, standardized jobs requiring little judgment than on jobs which are subject to considerable variation and changing situations.

Closeness of Supervision. Individuals working under close, constant supervision observe instruc-

tions much more carefully than those who work pretty much by themselves most of the time.

Check on Results. When performance can be checked closely, when there is visible, lasting evidence of how well a job is done, instructions usually are given closer attention.

Thus, a telephone operator or bolt tightener performs better than a department-store salesgirl because the former are engaged in doing the same simple, routine tasks over and over, while the salesgirl has a new situation to face in each sale.

The hat trimmer does just as she is told because she knows she is being watched by the inspector. The salesman knows he probably isn't being watched and that no one is likely to know whether he uses one set of selling methods or another. His chances of getting into difficulties are considerably less.

The Pullman porter shines the shoes and the bolt tightener tightens the bolts because it is easy to see whether they did so. Definite evidence exists and is quite likely to be noticed. The salesman can call on the assistant buyer instead of the vice-president who really does the buying and his superior has no way of knowing it. The truck driver can run red lights with only a slight chance of being found out, while the hat trimmer who uses red feathers instead of green is sure to be called down.

The conclusion to be drawn here is that it is much more difficult to get instructions carried out by subordinates engaged in work of a sales type than by employees engaged in most other types of work. This does not imply that the problem is an easy one by any means, so far as factory workers and similar employees are concerned. The point is that the job of getting ideas followed out is especially difficult in the selling field.

But even if salesmen and store managers and salesgirls and similar subordinates are harder to control, the fact is that some few executives have succeeded in getting them to follow instructions and to obey policies. The salesmen of some concerns do follow ideas and use the sound selling methods they are advised to use, and they profit by them. Some groups of store managers do deal skillfully with customers. These are the exceptions, but they demonstrate that the executives in charge have the ability to get results with instructions.

Other executives could get equally good results if they would acknowledge and study the problem and apply the same leadership methods that the few successful executives use.

Getting instructions carried out calls for leadership of a high order. Realizing this, some executives have despaired of success because of the mistaken idea that leadership ability is a characteristic possessed by a chosen few.

However, the belief that leaders are born and not made is just as ridiculous as the belief that salesmen must be born with an instinct for selling to be effective at that work. Both leading and selling are arts that anyone can learn.

Although some leaders are successful because they have some one trait or characteristic to a high degree, leadership as a general rule requires close observance of a number of principles. Analysis of leadership and careful observation of various leaders and executives show that the leadership function as a whole is somewhat intricate and involved, but that most of the individual steps are relatively easy to grasp and master.

The more of the principles a leader observes, the more successful he will be in getting instructions, plans, and policies carried out. The more of them he disregards, the less success he will have. For while the sort of leadership needed to get instructions observed is by no means inflexible, disregard of any major steps is a definite handicap and is quite likely to mean serious loss of effectiveness, if not complete failure.

However, before discussing the technique of leadership further, it is advisable for the executive to consider two questions:

First, what are the real reasons why subordinates disregard instructions?

Second, what are the relative merits of the two general methods of getting results—driving and leading?

These questions must be answered before it is possible to appreciate the importance of the technique required to get satisfactory performance on instructions.

Chapter V

WHY INSTRUCTIONS ARE DISREGARDED

Why is it that salesmen and other employees who work without close supervision will disregard instructions and policies, when by doing so they risk the loss of their jobs and incomes?

Executives who have studied this question agree that there are three explanations for the failure of subordinates to follow instructions:

—Either they don't know *what* they are expected to do.
—Or they don't know *how* to do the job in question.
—Or they don't *want* to do the job.

The first two reasons are easily dealt with. All that needs to be done is to repeat the instructions more clearly to eliminate any misunderstanding about what subordinates are expected to do, or explain the instructions in greater detail to make certain the subordinates do know how to do the job. More will be said on those two points in a later chapter.

The third reason, that subordinates don't want to do the job, is considerably more difficult to cope with and needs further interpretation. For not wanting to do a job may mean not preferring to do it, or actually being opposed to it. It may mean that the employee has no objection to the job but doesn't care enough about doing it. Or the employee may definitely dislike the job or the instruction and therefore object vigorously to doing it.

Specifically, then, the reasons for not wanting to do a job can be divided into two groups:

First, insufficient desire.
Second, dislike of the instruction.

Overcoming the lack of desire is less difficult than removing actual dislike for an instruction, but is by no means easy. Lack of desire is a result of laziness. Many subordinates are lazy; they take the lines of least resistance whenever possible and tend to resist extra effort or additional work. It must be recognized that many men have little ambition and too few of them have any real desire to get ahead. They may wish they could get ahead, but the desire is not strong enough to stimulate them to do extra work which does not appeal to them. In conversation, most of these men would deny these charges indignantly, but their actions and working habits prove the point. Some sort of incentive or penalty is needed to get them to try new ideas or

to take on new or extra work before they will overcome their lazy tendencies.

Reasons Why Instructions Are Disliked

Getting results becomes a much more complicated task, however, if the subordinates actively and definitely dislike the instructions. The task is especially difficult when the instructions mean more work, as they usually do. Most employees feel that they already are overworked. They tend to resist instructions which add to their work unless they feel sure they will gain by following them.

Some instructions are disliked because the work involved will be disagreeable or embarrassing. Thus, a salesman may avoid calling on new prospective customers, when instructed to do so, because he becomes embarrassed when making contacts with strangers. Other instructions will take more time than they are worth, in the subordinate's opinion.

Many subordinates dislike all instructions in general, because they have found from past experience that too many new instructions or policies are unsound. They object also because instructions frequently are introduced and then disregarded by the management, or else contradicted within a short time by other new instructions. In many cases, moreover, new instructions or policies involve commitments by the management which the management does not follow out.

As an example of the latter point, a group of chain-store managers was rebuked because there were too many price tags missing on the shelves and was instructed to see that every item was priced, and priced correctly. Then the store managers were unable to get from headquarters the price tags they needed to complete their pricing. A few experiences of this sort soon lead to a rather general disregard of instructions. The subordinates reason this way: If those price tags are so important, why is it they don't have a sufficient stock in the warehouse; why should we worry about price tags if the office doesn't?

A parallel illustration was cited by a packing-house salesman who had just been criticized for low sales volume:

"I'll admit my sales are low. This is the worst year I've had since I started, but I don't think it's my fault. They keep telling me to sell more fresh meat, and I've tried as hard as I know how. But I have mostly high-class trade which wants the best or nothing. Time after time, my dealers have complained about the weight or the trim on the cuts the house delivers to them, until now they refuse to buy from me unless the price is so low they can't turn it down. At least ten times, I've gone into the office and begged for the right sort of merchandise. They always promise to take care of it immediately but there hasn't been any im-

provement. And still they have nerve enough to write me a letter, criticizing me because my fresh-meat business is down. A salesman has a hard enough job these days without having to lose business because the company won't do its part."

Another common reason why subordinates dislike instructions is that they do not appreciate their importance or their merits. More will be said on this subject later, but it can be pointed out here that large concerns have made surveys which indicate that employees frequently have an alarming lack of appreciation of the reasons why recently issued instructions are necessary or desirable.

The Fundamental Reason

None of these explanations, however, gets to the true source of the problem. Once again the real fundamental reason must be sought. We still have not determined why employees will disregard instructions they don't like at the risk of losing their jobs and the means of supporting their families. Surely a job should be the most important thing of all to the workingman. That would seem self-evident. Yet even during the depression of the early 1930's, when jobs were scarce or nonexistent, employees still took these risks rather than do things they didn't want to do.

The answer is that *a job isn't nearly so important in the eyes of the employee as it might be;* other con-

siderations are more important. They shouldn't be, perhaps, but they are.

A job unquestionably is highly important to a man who is unemployed and needs an income badly. When he gets the job, he usually is quite pleased and begins work with the best of intentions. Soon, however, he begins to find fault with his new job. Perhaps the hours are too long, or the work is too disagreeable, or the pay isn't enough. A new truck driver may dislike the country run assigned to him and wish he could get a city route so that he could be sure of getting home for dinner every night. A newly employed salesman may feel that his territory is too small or that it hasn't enough big accounts.

As time goes on, an employee can and usually does find many things to complain about. The more complaints he stores up, the less valuable his job seems to him. And the less valuable it seems, the more chances he will take of losing it.

Some executives have the mistaken idea that their subordinates as a group are highly pleased and well satisfied with their jobs. But they invariably are quite wrong. They are lucky if they have one or two individual employees who are entirely, or nearly, satisfied with their jobs, let alone a whole group. Indeed, the executive who sees or hears no signs of dissatisfaction will do well to be on his guard, because silence is a signal of danger.

The objections are there; he can be sure of that. If they don't come out into the light, it is a sure sign that the executive himself or some other individual in authority is stifling complaints.

Lack of appreciation of the job, or dislike of it or some aspect of it, is the basic explanation of why men risk jobs by disregarding instructions which they dislike. Skillfully conducted interviews with subordinates invariably confirm that conclusion.

This broad subject will be discussed in other chapters. At this point, however, it is necessary to emphasize one vital factor—the dominant desire of every individual holding a job to feel important, to feel that he counts for something and is respected, that his ideas and feelings are worthy of consideration. Most men want to have their own way, as a means of establishing their importance, and are unwilling to do things which they consider wrong or unnecessary. They want to feel that their "rights" are being observed. In short, they want themselves and their ideas to be respected. The extent of this desire for importance and respect varies with individuals, but it is present in everyone, and must be satisfied by the job before the job will be fully valued.

When a new instruction appears unreasonable or unnecessary or unjustified, or clashes with the convictions of the employee, he feels that his interests are being violated. If the instruction is not ex-

plained, and he can't explain it satisfactorily to himself, he feels that his rights are being disregarded and hence that he is considered unimportant. For if he were regarded as important, it is reasonable to expect that the executive would go to the trouble of explaining the instruction and talking it over with him. If he objects to an instruction, and is overruled without being convinced, he receives the impression that his ideas and opinions are not valued properly and that he doesn't count.

And because this desire to appear important and to count for something means more to the employee than his job, and because the tendency is for instructions and executives to violate this desire, he risks the job rather than observe and carry out requests which make him feel unimportant.

Recognition of this factor is essential to getting results with instructions. There are several other explanations for the regrettable attitude subordinates take toward instructions, but the desire to feel important unquestionably is one of the most significant of all.

Two Possible Solutions

Since it is highly desirable to get instructions carried out, in order to improve efficiency and increase profits (assuming that the instructions are sound and necessary), the next question is, what

can be done to get instructions carried out more effectively by subordinates?

In general, there are two solutions to the question:

1. Drive the subordinates to get instructions observed.
2. Lead them, so that they will be willing to observe instructions.

The comparative merits of the two methods are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter VI

DRIVING VERSUS LEADING

The executive who drives endeavors to get his instructions carried out by the appeal of fear—by worrying and threatening his subordinates. The leader, on the other hand, avoids fear and threats and worry, and tries to get results by creating an understanding of instructions and a willingness and a desire to observe them.

Driving unquestionably is the more commonly used method, primarily because it is easier to follow and because it apparently is a fairly successful method.

Executives who drive quickly point out, if their methods are challenged, that driving works in the army and therefore will work equally well in business. And there are times when driving does work well in business, times when it is the one best method to use, but beyond the exceptional occasions driving is open to serious question.

Driving works in the army because the army can back up its commands and instructions much more effectively than any executive can. The army subordinate who disobeys can be imprisoned, shot

by a firing squad, or humiliated in his community. He can be assigned to dangerous details or to jobs which are disagreeable, and he can't avoid any of the jobs without severe penalty.

None of these penalties is very feasible in business. We can't shoot men for disregarding orders or instructions; we can't send them out on raiding squads where they will encounter danger. Nor can we imprison them or force them to work at disagreeable tasks. All we can do is discharge them or lay them off, and, as already has been mentioned, the fear of incurring these penalties usually is not strong enough to insure observance of instructions.

That is one reason why driving works more effectively in the army than in business. There is a second reason which is equally significant:

The army has more effective appeals and emotions to work on than are available to the business executive who tries to drive.

In business, the only really effective appeals are the desire for security and the desire for self-importance. The army can play, in time of war, on those same appeals, plus hate of a common enemy, fear of death, patriotism, and protection of home and loved ones. These appeals collectively are more effective than those which are present in business. There is considerably more reason for the individual in the army to subordinate himself to the orders of a superior.

Thus, this defense of driving patently is based on a false comparison. And analysis of the methods used by executives who drive and of their effect on the subordinate gives convincing evidence against the practice of driving as a technique of leadership.

Tactics of the Driver

The driver, as mentioned, relies principally on worry and fear. He discharges employees, often on slight provocation, in order to make the rest of his subordinates afraid that they too will be fired. He backs up his orders and his criticism with threats of discharge. He belittles and shames and criticizes severely with the expectation that subordinates will do as he wishes in order to avoid such experiences in the future.

In addition to relying on fear and worry, the driver usually follows other practices that are not essential to his general method but that have a direct bearing on the sort of results he gets.

Refusing to Justify His Orders. A driver usually wants no questions asked. His word is to be law. Subordinates are to follow his dictates because he says so. "I'll do the thinking; you do what I tell you," is his advice to those who work under him.

Asking Too Much of Subordinates. The driver assigns jobs according to his needs, with little regard for whether he has allowed enough time or assigned too much work for the individual con-

cerned. He follows the questionable theory that the more you ask, the more you get.

Criticizing Unreasonably. The driver finds fault whenever possible, just to "keep the men on their toes." He criticizes petty mistakes and usually refuses to recognize that conditions may justify being behind with work or deviating from set rules.

Granting that most employees prefer not to lose their jobs, even though they will risk the loss under certain conditions, there nevertheless are three reasons why the tactics of the driver cannot be successful as a consistent policy.

Worry Reduces Work Output

When a subordinate is worried he cannot, by definition, give his full and best attention to his work. When a man is worried, his mind is on the subject he is disturbed about. The more thought he gives to his worries, the less he gives to his work. For example, a salesman who is afraid he will be discharged keeps that possibility constantly in mind and therefore does not give so much thought as he otherwise would to the problems of his customers. In addition, he probably will spend less time working and his frame of mind and general manner will be such that he will make an unfavorable impression on prospects and customers. A salesman who is worried certainly will lack con-

fidence. And confidence is essential to successful salesmanship.

The store clerk who is worried will be less pleasant with customers. The salesgirl probably will be more indifferent than usual with her customers. The truck driver is more likely to have accidents and less likely to do as much work per day as he would if his mind were on his job rather than his worries.

Turnover Is Likely to Be High

The driver who discharges and lays off men frequently will have a good many new, inexperienced men to break in. As a result, work output is bound to be reduced.

If jobs are plentiful, there will be a great many quits, in which case there will be all the more green men to break in. Most progressive concerns do everything possible to decrease turnover, because they know it is costly. The driver who speeds up his turnover is certain to lose by it.

Fear Often Wears Off

When the driving executive doesn't discharge a large number of men or experience a good many quits, his methods again defeat his purpose, because the effect of his tactics wears off. The men become used to his threats. They find that he is bluffing and that nothing will happen if they dis-

regard his instructions. Accordingly, the driving turns into ineffectiveness and little or nothing is accomplished.

Consistently followed, however, driving invariably creates resentment against both the executive and the job. Resentment means a lower appreciation of the job, and thus invites still further disregard for instructions.

The Place for Driving

Thus, there is ample logic to back up experience which shows that driving as a general policy is unprofitable and unwise. No driver ever has been successful at getting instructions followed consistently over a period of time in business. Some drivers apparently are successful as business executives, but *not* because they drive. Their success is the result of having a superior product or superior manufacturing methods or some other advantage over competitors.

This does not mean, however, that there never is a place for driving or for some of its important elements, for there definitely are times when driving or its equivalent is absolutely necessary.

Every executive has occasions when he must get a new emergency plan accomplished immediately. There is no time to explain the why and wherefore in detail to a large number of subordinates. The plan calls for unusual effort and plenty of overtime

work. Everyone must do his part, whether he happens to approve of the plan or not.

The executive who has tried to drive his subordinates in their regular routine of work is likely to get quite unsatisfactory results when such an emergency arises, simply because his methods have become ineffective. The leader, however, having followed sound, effective methods of dealing with subordinates, is in a position to request blind acceptance of his instructions and will get what he asks for. For his usual relations with his employees are so satisfactory that his subordinates are willing to follow his emergency instructions without question. The leader must not call for such support too often, but in occasional emergencies he can and should ask for it.

The Essentials of Leading

Since, then, leading is the more effective and permanent method of getting instructions, policies, plans, and ideas carried out, a careful study of the technique of leading is desirable on the part of every executive.

As already stated, leading is a complex art, embodying principles and practices which should be closely adhered to. Moreover, it is not a technique that can be installed and made effective overnight. To establish the right sort of background may require many months, depending on the nature of

the relationship between executives and subordinates in the past.

The technique of leading and getting things done, as discussed in the following pages, divides into these topics:

—Selling yourself to subordinates.
—Presenting instructions skillfully.
—Following up instructions effectively.
—Getting help with instructions.
—Improving subordinates' attitudes.

In the discussion of these subjects emphasis will be laid on the specific steps in leadership which are most often disregarded and on those whose importance is generally underestimated, as well as on the major steps which have the most direct bearing on the problem of getting instructions and policies closely observed.

Chapter VII

SELLING YOURSELF TO YOUR MEN—WINNING RESPECT

Men—salesmen, truck drivers, ditchdiggers, bookkeepers—work better and more willingly and carry out instructions more readily for some superiors than for others. You do, your friends do, everyone does.

What is there about these superiors that inspires and produces better effort and greater willingness? Personality, some people say, and undoubtedly that is true. But there are different sorts of personality. We all see personality to an envied extent in stage and screen stars, in salesmen, and in social acquaintances, but we feel, and quite rightly so, that they might make a mess of our jobs as executives. Thus, personality is a vague explanation requiring further analysis.

Personality is defined most simply as ability to make favorable impressions on other people. The man with a good personality, then, is one who attracts us to him. And what attracts us are the things he says and does and knows.

When the individual in question is one for whom we work, on whom we are dependent for income

and security, we acknowledge that he has a good personality if he says and does and knows things which make us feel that we probably will be successful and secure. If he possesses this ability to a high degree, our feeling becomes what is called loyalty.

Ability to develop loyalty among subordinates is an invaluable asset to an executive, because loyal subordinates tend to follow such a leader with little or no question. His instructions often are followed out almost blindly, whereas the same instructions from other executives would be questioned and challenged and perhaps disregarded completely.

Obviously, no executive can develop loyalty overnight. It exists as a result of contacts between executive and subordinates over a period of time. Moreover, loyalty can be built up as the reward for months or years of sound leadership and then can be lost in a day because of a single serious mistake by the executive.

The recipe for loyalty fortunately is not hard to find. Hundreds of salesmen have agreed in open discussion that an executive to whom they are loyal, who has sold himself and his methods, must be a man who stands out in three respects:

1. *He has won the respect of his subordinates*, so that they consider him a man worth being associated with and a man who will help them be successful.

2. *He has won the confidence of his men*, so that they believe that what he says or recommends is right and that he will protect their interests.
3. *He has won the friendship of his men*, whereby he eliminates any personal antagonism and builds up a desire to help the executive for his own sake.

Plain logic makes it clear that the absence of any one of these elements will weaken the feeling of loyalty. Lack of respect, lack of confidence, or lack of friendly relations is a sure handicap. Conversely, their existence is certain to make instructions more acceptable. The greater the extent to which they exist, the more readily subordinates will follow the executive and his ideas.

How to Win Respect

Respect, strangely enough, is not really won; for it usually exists until it is lost. Subordinates ordinarily are ready to respect any superior when they first meet him. His position itself is enough to create respect. In addition, individuals working under an executive want to be able to respect him because they want him to be the sort of man who will help them accomplish their desires. So they will respect him until he proves himself unworthy, in their eyes, of being respected.

Unfortunately, many executives quite unknowingly reduce this respect to some extent soon after they assume their positions merely because they fail to look at their actions and policies from the viewpoint of the subordinates. They fail to realize that what seems unimportant to them or to the company may be vitally important in the eyes of the employees. They forget that subordinates often are considerably more critical than superiors.

Judging by the complaints which employees voice most frequently against executives, the most significant factors in maintaining respect are these:

—Encourage free speech.
—Finish what you start.
—Know what's going on.
—Give necessary instructions only.
—Acknowledge good work.

Many executives have lost a good deal of respect by disregard of these points. Since each one is important to successful and profitable management, as well as to the maintenance of respect, they deserve careful consideration.

Encourage Free Speech

No executive consciously wants his subordinates to be "yes men." But far too many encourage or require employees to be "yes men" by their atti-

tude toward objections and criticism from subordinates, and by their attitude toward suggestions contributed by subordinates.

When employees do not feel free to express their opinions and to contribute ideas, the superior loses in several ways. First of all, he loses the benefit of their opinions, which, though they may be erroneous or unsound part of the time, nevertheless are decidedly valuable to any executive who wishes to keep well informed. Subordinates may pick up a great deal of useful information and have a great many valuable ideas.

In the second place, and more pertinent to this subject, an executive who does not know what his employees are thinking is handicapped seriously in dealing with them, particularly in getting instructions carried out. Unless he knows whether his men object to an idea or instruction, and unless he knows why they object, the executive is in a poor position to know how much selling is required and what particular points to concentrate on in selling his instructions.

In the third place, and directly to the point, employees are certain to lack respect for superiors who refuse to face facts, answer objections, or consider fully and fairly the suggestions made by subordinates.

When they see an executive criticize employees for voicing objections, they conclude that the ex-

ecutive is unwilling to run the risk of being proved wrong in a decision. When the executive dismisses a suggestion without discussion, they get the impression that he has no respect for their ideas.

Thus, when a salesman suggests in a meeting that a new package is needed for a piece of merchandise, and the sales manager then flares up and says: "What we need is some real salesmanship; we wouldn't need a new package if you men would get out and work," it is not strange that the salesman in question, and other salesmen as well, stop talking altogether. They feel that it is safer to remain quiet.

Subordinates have a term for the experience of being criticized for voicing suggestions and objections. They call it "getting knocked down." The superior who responds to a complaint about high selling prices with the retort that, "If you men would really get out and sell, these prices would bring plenty of business," literally is knocking down his subordinates. He has side-stepped their objection by a counterattack on them, which knocks down their ego, their interest, and their courage.

One young sales manager who recalled clearly from personal experience the way salesmen feel toward executives who refuse to face the objections their subordinates raise, addressed his men in this way:

"I never realized, until I became a sort of a boss myself, just what the executives of an organization like this are up against. From my position as a salesman, I had the idea that an executive should straighten out all the troubles overnight. But, men, it doesn't work that way. An executive isn't a magician; in fact, all the best business brains in the world haven't been able to solve some problems. There are some policies in every sales organization which are wrong, but no one knows what to do about them.

"What I am leading up to is this: You men have a good many complaints on your minds, I'm sure of that. There are things about this business that you don't like, if I know anything about a bunch of salesmen. So let's bring the complaints out into the open. Let's talk them over. Some of them we can take care of. Some of your complaints are due to misunderstandings. And some of them won't be taken care of because we don't know the answers. If you know the answers, please tell us and we'll be very happy to get the help. But if we don't know how to eliminate the trouble, and if you don't, then the best thing to do is forget about our troubles and work along with whatever advantages we have.

"I want each of you not only to feel free, but to feel obligated, to speak up when you have a complaint or an objection. Even if you don't receive any satisfaction, you will feel better for having

spoken your mind. And I can promise you that no one will get into trouble for saying what he thinks at any sales meeting I conduct."

The extent to which freedom of speech and freedom to criticize constructively can be permitted must depend on the resourcefulness of the superior. If he has the courage to admit mistakes when he has made them, if he has the ability to explain away unsound objections convincingly, he can profit by encouraging his men to state their objections. At any rate, freedom of speech is highly desirable and definitely should be encouraged to whatever extent the executive feels able to cope with it.

Finish What Is Started

When a leader inaugurates a new plan, he usually is doing three things: adding to the work of his subordinates, endeavoring to improve efficiency, and putting an instruction to the test.

Failure to cash in on the profits from one instruction may not seem important to the executive, particularly if he hits on another idea which looks still more promising. True, he loses the benefit of the idea and the time spent originating and introducing it, but that may not be so serious.

More serious by far is the fact that the executive has let his subordinates get away with something. He has let them disregard an instruction. The fact that the instruction was not carried through may

make no difference so far as profits are concerned, but it does make a big difference in another way, in that the employees will begin to realize, sooner or later, if many ideas are dropped, that their leader does not follow through, that nothing will happen if they disregard his ideas. Then they are likely to pay less and less attention to his instructions in the future.

Accordingly, it is highly desirable for the executive to follow through on every plan or instruction until it has been observed properly or until he decides it is unworkable. And when a plan is dropped for any reason, it is desirable to announce the fact and to explain the reasons.

Most plans, however, are not dropped deliberately. They become sidetracked in favor of some newer plan or are just lost sight of. Since frequent experiences of this sort are certain to mean loss of respect, executives will find that it pays to keep track of their plans and to finish what they start, even when it is not entirely convenient to do so.

Know What's Going On

The executive who gets out of touch with the job his subordinates are doing, and with the way they work and the conditions under which they work, is bound to make mistakes which will damage his prestige seriously.

The sales manager of a wholesale paper house dropped considerably in the esteem of a star salesman when he rebuked the salesman for failing to fill out a certain report on an important contact. He did not know that the forms had been out of print for six weeks and that neither that salesman nor any of the others had been filling them out recently. If the report were really important, the sales manager should have been checking it. If he had been checking, he would have known the report forms were not available and would have been protected against giving an unwarranted rebuke.

One salesman completely lost respect for his branch manager when the latter held up another salesman's work as a model. The branch manager asked the salesman why he couldn't collect his accounts as promptly as the other salesman could. He did not know, because he had not checked, that the other salesman had been having considerable trouble also, in recent months, although he formerly had had a good record. Indeed, the branch manager was the only one who didn't know it.

It also is an easy matter for an executive to get out-of-date concerning competitive practices unless he takes definite steps to keep informed. He may not know that competitive prices have declined, that competitors have added new lines or new styles. Then, when he attempts to talk facts with

his own men, he shows up his lack of information in a serious way.

In addition, subordinates sometimes take advantage of an executive who gets out of touch with his employees and the way they are working. If he is lax, they may pad expense accounts, work short hours, fake their reports, or deceive him in other ways. And the direct loss from such situations is not the only one; for subordinates invariably lose respect for a superior who is easily fooled.

One way to keep in touch with what's going on—a way that serves other ends also—is to spend a reasonable amount of time on the job with the subordinates. A good deal of useful, helpful information can be acquired by observation and through casual conversation. By observing the way his men work, the problems they are encountering, the methods being used by competitive concerns, the executive easily can keep well informed, and at the same time teach and stimulate his men. Regular detailed study of the records and reports of individual men is another source of information. The leader who relies solely on summaries and averages is likely to overlook many useful facts.

Ask Necessary Things Only

Unthinkingly, any executive is likely to ask his employees to carry out plans which have merit but are by no means worth the time and trouble they

take. Subordinates resent such requests and think less of the superior who makes them. As an example, the vice-president of a large manufacturing organization instructed his salesmen to make out blank orders for all prospects contacted unsuccessfully and to state thereon the reason why no sale was made.

The idea definitely had merit at first. Soon, however, the salesmen found that there were only four or five possible answers to put down, and also found that no good purpose was served by the report. They were followed up if the blank orders were not turned in, but otherwise that was the last they heard of them. The amount of work involved was not great, but the salesmen considered the instruction unnecessary and thought less of the man who issued it.

A chain-store superintendent insisted that all his supervisors be home at seven o'clock every evening to await a possible call from him. Calls seldom came, however, and were inconsequential when they did. This instruction was resented strongly, both because it inconvenienced them and because it was unnecessary.

To avoid similar mistakes, it is desirable for the executive to put himself in the place of his employees when issuing instructions, in order to see whether his instructions are reasonable and necessary from their point of view and to judge whether

the instructions are worth the time they will take.

Unnecessary instructions are objectionable, not only because they arouse resentment and thus cause loss of respect, but also because the time spent on such instructions often prevents subordinates from doing other worth-while jobs.

Acknowledge Good Work

Praise or some form of commendation is highly important for three reasons: first, because praise, under proper circumstances, stimulates most subordinates to better work; second, because praise is needed to offset the depressing effects of criticism; and third, because praise wins respect for the leader.

The tendency of many executives is to be much too stingy with praise. Some leaders forget to praise good work or neglect to do so because they do not appreciate its importance. Others deliberately refrain from praising subordinates because they fear it will make them self-satisfied and influence them to relax their efforts on the job.

While some few subordinates do react to praise in an undesirable manner, the opposite is true in nine cases out of ten. Praise is a stimulant to most individuals; it is one of the foremost rewards they seek in business. The desire to feel secure and to acquire prestige is present in all but a very few

subordinates. Praise helps to satisfy these desires and stimulates efforts to earn more commendation.

Too much praise may, of course, make any employee too well satisfied, just as too much of anything is detrimental. But subordinates almost unanimously complain that executives are too conservative with praise. Although the subordinates themselves are not competent to judge how much praise they should receive, their conviction that they do not get as much as they deserve undoubtedly is significant.

The executive who fears that praise will have a harmful effect need only experiment to find out which of his subordinates will react unfavorably to a normal amount of it. Then when these individuals have been picked out, it is an easy matter to limit the amount of praise they receive and then bestow it in more generous quantities on the other subordinates who respond favorably.

Skillfully and intelligently used, praise helps greatly to take the sting out of criticism, forestalling the resentment that too often follows criticism. When an executive criticizes a subordinate, the latter's pride usually is hurt. He is likely, in addition, to feel that the superior is being unfair. By including praise with his criticism, the leader softens the blow to the subordinate's pride and lessens the chance of being considered unfair. In effect, the praise counterbalances the criticism so

far as the employee's feelings are concerned, but does not make the criticism any less effective. On the contrary, criticism usually becomes more effective when accompanied by praise, because the subordinate is likely to heed the criticism in order to win further praise.

The sales manager of a wholesale grocery company provided a striking illustration of the way to combine praise with criticism, in talking with a salesman who had disregarded an instruction to balance his sales of low-profit merchandise by increased effort on merchandise carrying a higher profit.

"Morgan," the sales manager began, "your average gross still is 3 per cent under the rest of the salesmen, because you are concentrating on staples and neglecting specialties (criticism). Now, I know the specialties are harder to sell, but that's why we have salesmen. The other men are balancing out pretty well and you could, too.

"Looking over your commodity sales breakdown, I notice that you have done a fine job on tea and spices. You stand second on those items (praise). What I'm asking is that you do the same sort of job on other high-profit items—salad dressing, olives, pickles, and so on.

"You are doing a good job on tea and spices because, for some reason, you're interested in selling them. So become just as interested in the other

profitable items, and then your record will look a lot better. How about it?"

Even when a subordinate's results do not justify praise, it is possible to find some trait or characteristic to commend as a means of restoring his confidence and guarding against the usual resentment following criticism. The general manager of a large department store quoted the following remarks he had directed at a department head whose work had been slipping seriously.

"Adams, you are one of the hardest working men in this whole organization. A number of men have mentioned that fact to me in the last few months. There isn't anyone who works any harder. That's a fine trait and it gives you a big advantage over some of the other men around here (praise). But just working hard isn't enough. You have to use your head when you work.

"I notice also that your men seem to like you. That's another big advantage that is sure to help you (praise). However, I don't believe that they have as much respect for you as they might, simply because you have made too many mistakes in judgment (criticism). Now, there's no reason why a man with the ability you have along some lines shouldn't take hold of this job and really make a showing. I think your chief trouble is that you are stubborn. You like your own ideas too much and pay too little attention to the instructions and

suggestions you receive. You have some good ideas and we want you to use them, but don't reject all the ideas and advice you get from other people.

"If you would work as hard on the worth-while things as you do on your own pet ideas, which usually turn out wrong, you would have your department in fine shape. Think that over and talk with me again next week."

There is some trait or accomplishment to praise in every subordinate. Singling out the favorable points and commending them invariably puts subordinates in a more satisfactory frame of mind and earns the executive a reputation for being fair and human. Such a reputation is certain to build up respect among subordinates.

Many executives have admitted that praising usually does not occur to them, while criticizing does. That unquestionably is because situations which call for criticism definitely require attention. Something must be done. But situations which justify praise do not *require* any action. Everything is all right. Hence, the busy executive too frequently neglects to give praise simply because it is not necessary, in the sense of being imperative.

Praise is necessary, however, in the sense of being highly desirable and beneficial. The habit of giving commendation is well worth adopting, and can be developed rather easily by setting up a mental association of criticism and praise.

Other Factors in Holding Respect

Subordinates bring up a number of other points which a leader must watch if he is to hold respect. Some of the more important points they emphasize are the following:

Be Businesslike. Employees seem to lose quickly their respect for an executive who fails to stick fairly close to business when he is with them. The sales manager or department head who has a good supply of jokes and tells them freely soon gains a reputation for being a "good fellow" but he does not get the credit he really deserves for business ability. No one objects, of course, to a little fun or diversion now and then, and it probably does considerable good in drawing superior and employee together, but it is easy to overdo that sort of thing. In addition, the executive who neglects business too much encourages his subordinates to do the same.

A sound policy along these lines was described by the head of a specialty sales organization who spends a good share of his time with his salesmen:

"When I am with one of the men, we talk nothing but business during working hours; then if we are together for lunch or in the evening, we still talk business, for the most part, but along different lines.

"I firmly believe that my job, when I am working with a salesman, is to observe the way he works

and teach him what I know about the business. I can't afford to lose any great amount of time telling stories or talking baseball.

"When we are through working, I encourage the men to talk about themselves and their problems. That is considerably more interesting to me, and to them, than lighter conversation, and I can learn a great deal about the men who work for me. I really believe they enjoy my contacts, too, because the men invariably lay out a big program which will keep me with them all day.

"When I first started my policy of staying out on the sales territories as much as possible, I found that several of my men wanted to talk about automobiles, or shows, or similar matters between calls. One was a hockey fan, and another liked to recall his experiences in the army. But even those men enjoy talking business. When I encourage them, they describe the peculiarities of their customers and the problems they meet every day. Then I can give them some helpful ideas and at the same time learn a good many points that are valuable to me in my work."

An executive must get credit for being human, but he also must develop a reputation for being a serious businessman, and that probably means, to play safe, talking business 95 per cent of the time.

Be Patient. The closer a leader comes to being a driver, the more likely he is to be impatient. And

the further he is removed from the subordinates' job, the more likely he is to be impatient—to expect results too soon.

To be patient, however, it is not necessary to let employees take their own time or to set easy schedules. The experienced, successful executive usually tries to set a stiff pace. He may deliberately specify that a job be completed or a quota attained sooner than he actually expects, just to spur his men on. But he does not set the goal so high that it seems unreasonable and he does not upbraid his men when they fall short. Instead, he lets them know he is pleased with the progress they did make. That attitude makes a friendly game of the job and stimulates the men to try their hardest, in the hopes of winning still greater praise by exceeding future quotas.

For the executive who wants quick results on a job or wants to reach a high goal and isn't sure just how high to aim, there is an easy and effective plan which may get better results than any other and will eliminate entirely the possibility of seeming to expect too much.

That method is to ask the men themselves to set the time limit or the goal. Four times out of five they will promise voluntarily as much as the leader wanted to ask for. And since it is their own idea, the employees are not likely to feel imposed on. For example, if a sales manager requests his

salesmen to get five new customers each, the men may feel that it is impossible or unreasonable. But if he points out to them the need for greater sales volume, suggests new customers as a means of attaining the volume, and asks how many new customers each man could sign up in a month's time, the salesmen voluntarily may pledge themselves to get seven or even ten new accounts.

Or if the sales manager wants five new accounts per man in six weeks' time, but fears that the plan may seem unreasonable, he can leave the time limit up to his men. If he states the proposition in the form of a friendly challenge, the chances are the men may set four weeks as the limit.

If the group sets too long a time or too low a goal, failing to respond to the challenge, it may be possible to change their decision by pointing out ways to speed up results. If that does not work, it usually is well to be content. Men don't accomplish what they think they can't.

Experience has shown many hundreds of times that a leader who expects results too soon, soon doesn't get results. His men are discouraged before they start.

In addition to expecting too quick results, executives also tend to expect too much of new men, or of men on new jobs or territories. Possibly the best way to avoid this tendency is to set a goal which definitely is fair and reasonable and then ask the

subordinate to exceed it if he can. He is quite certain to try harder on such an assignment than he would if he felt he were being asked to do the impossible.

Give Your Men Credit for Their Ideas. There is a great temptation to take credit for subordinates' ideas. The executive seldom realizes what he is doing, because he usually adds to an idea or improves it in some way before he passes it on. The mistake is so serious, however, that it is necessary to lean over backwards in giving credit to the subordinate, no matter how slight his contribution may have been.

While it probably is true that an executive himself does not get so much credit for recognizing a good idea as for originating one, the difference in credit will by no means make up for the loss of respect which results when a subordinate feels his idea has been appropriated.

Indeed, employees value recognition for new ideas so highly that some executives make it a practice to plant ideas with subordinates in the hope that they will follow through and develop the ideas so that credit can be given them. There is no need for going that far very often, but it does pay to give an employee all the credit he is entitled to, or more. His appreciation may stimulate him to make additional contributions to the superior

which will greatly outweigh any credit the executive may have given up.

As a means of encouraging employees to think about their jobs and of drawing out the good ideas which are sure to be developed by any group of subordinates, a number of companies conduct idea contests for employees. The appeal of these contests is indicated by the fact that in one concern fully 10 per cent of the contributions come from individuals in the executive or supervisory group. Most men are proud of their original ideas and want credit for them.

Giving credit is important, but the executive should not stop there. He can make capital of his generosity by giving the credit publicly in the presence of others. That pleases the subordinate still further and helps to build up for the leader a reputation for being fair and square and appreciative. Such a reputation is a valuable asset in maintaining and increasing respect.

Don't Evade Responsibility for Mistakes. No one likes to admit mistakes, but an executive cannot afford to blame his mistakes on someone else, particularly on his subordinates. Even when a subordinate shares in a mistake, it never pays to blame him if the superior also was responsible. A sales manager for a large printing concern learned this lesson through a bitter experience. He gave a sales-

man instructions to contact a buyer who was about to place a large order and to stay with him until the order was placed. He was to leave no stone unturned to get the order. When the salesman reached the buyer's place of business in another city, late that day, he found the buyer had just left for Chicago, three hundred miles away, by plane. Fearful lest the buyer might place the order in Chicago, the salesman took the next plane. He located the buyer, stayed near him for three days, but lost the order.

His expense account, which came to $90, was criticized severely by the treasurer, who had just demanded a reduction in sales expense. He criticized the sales manager sharply, but the latter disclaimed responsibility. He stated, truthfully, that he had not authorized the plane ride and other large expenses. And strictly speaking, he hadn't. But he had, in effect, required them. Consequently, the salesman and his coworkers were angry at the sales manager's effort to pass the blame back to a subordinate. Since the sales manager tells the story himself, some years later, it is evident that the error impressed him with the importance of this rule.

The odd thing about admitting errors in judgment or mistakes, from the executive's standpoint, is that the admission may actually increase respect. It is so unusual for a superior openly to accept

blame that his honesty gains respect, nine times out of ten. It does not pay, of course, to have to make too many such admissions, but even when mistakes do occur frequently it is possible to handle them in a more effective way than by placing the blame on subordinates.

The rug buyer of a department store turned what threatened to be a disastrous error into profitable channels and greatly increased respect among his subordinates by taking full blame for a mistake that was only partly his own. He had dictated and signed an order for a large shipment of mats and found, after delivery, that the stenographer had written in the wrong size by mistake. He said nothing to her, but quietly advised his assistant that they were in for trouble because of the mistake he should have checked and caught.

The assistant buyer, without consulting his superior, called the salesmen together, after the mats had been in stock a week without selling, and explained the situation. He gave each man an allotment and asked them to help the department out of the hole. He explained that responsibility for the error was divided and that the buyer was taking the blame. The large quantity of mats was sold out in ten days at the regular price, although mats of that size never had sold well before.

Had the buyer blamed the stenographer and then tried to get the same support from his sales-

men, he would have failed completely. Admitting mistakes usually increases respect. It never destroys respect so much as does a reputation for evading responsibility for mistakes.

Be Firm, but Pleasant. Easygoing executives seldom maintain respect. Employees are quick to take advantage of a superior who is easygoing unless he has other balancing characteristics. This does not mean, however, that one must be hard-boiled. The popular idea of firmness seems to involve pounding the table, swearing, and talking loud, but actually, as common-sense reasoning indicates, none of these accompaniments is necessary or desirable.

One's own reaction to an individual who uses such methods gives the answer. We either pity him or find him ridiculous. And in either case attention is centered on his actions and his methods rather than on the message he is trying to put over.

Being firm means something quite different from being disagreeable or noisy. Talking emphatically, looking a man straight in the eye, being dead serious and impressive, make a far deeper impression than merely putting on a side show. A quiet, well-controlled tone is respected far more than shouting and swearing.

Sometimes, with some individuals, these methods are not entirely effective, but it pays to try them first. If they don't work, it always is possible to

become more vigorous. Table thumping, scowling, and greater emphasis in speech sometimes are necessary to impress subordinates who may not fully understand what the speaker is saying. Gestures and emphasis will impress foreigners who don't understand the words. But a group of fairly well-educated salesmen is more likely to be irritated than impressed with verbal violence.

The violent reprimand should be recognized in its true light; it either means loss of self-control or is an attempt to instill fear into the man on the other side of the desk. But fear means worry; and worry means a poorer job from the subordinate.

Being firm and pleasant doesn't require smiling, merely a calm and dispassionate attitude. Many widely known leaders and executives have been "tough," but again that is not the reason for their success. They are successful in spite of their toughness. The only time when it pays to become hard and to scare subordinates is when that is the last resort, when other methods have failed and the executive is ready to threaten and to discharge if necessary.

Know the Job Your Men Are Doing. The more an executive knows about his subordinates' job, the better chance he has of retaining their respect. No one should be deceived by the executive who says, "I don't know anything about selling shirts, but I know how to get them sold." Either he is being

modest or he is the exception to the rule that an executive ought to know how to do the subordinate's job a little better than the subordinate does.

A detailed knowledge of the job is not always essential, however. The higher the executive, the less necessary it is for him to know in detail the jobs under him. The president of a large corporation often knows very little about the work of his legal department or his treasurer. But the more he does know, the more respected he is certain to be.

Neither is it absolutely necessary for a sales manager to have carried a sample case, nor for a transportation superintendent to have driven a truck and trailer. But to get by without that experience and intimate knowledge of the job, such executives must have an abundance of good leadership ability in other directions so that their lack of experience will be overlooked—or tolerated.

In general, however, knowledge of the job is important both because employees expect it and because leaders who lack experience are likely to make serious errors. And unless an executive has proved, by demonstration or otherwise, that he is a good salesman or a good store manager, subordinates are likely not to respect his advice.

Experience on the job unquestionably is desirable but is not necessary. Business and sports both have produced countless examples to prove that intelli-

gent observation and analysis may be equally as valuable as experience.

Connie Mack was far from being a Mickey Cochrane as a catcher. However, he has done a very acceptable job of developing pitchers and catchers for his World's Champion teams.

Bob Zuppke, Pop Warner, and several other first-rank football coaches never were outstanding players but they somehow have turned out the winners and built up enviable records.

The president of one large grocery chain was a lawyer, who never spent an hour back of a grocery counter. Even so he is highly respected for his all-around ability. Many of the successful movie "magnates" came to that industry from other unrelated fields, and made good, at least temporarily.

Experience is, of course, the surest way to learn a job, but experience alone will not produce an executive. Indeed, there are thousands of salesmen who have spent twenty and thirty years acquiring experience but are not, and never will become sales executives. Experience must be supplemented by ability to analyze and plan and lead, and such ability can substitute for experience only if the executive is a keen enough observer to be able to learn the fundamentals of a job by watching and analyzing.

However, regardless of the way the job is mastered, the executive should master it. Many a keen executive has been laughed off a good job because

he didn't know a few petty and unimportant facts about the work his men were doing. It is difficult to pick up these small points without experience, and still harder to keep from making mistakes unless the details of the job have become second nature. An executive of a retail coal company was ridiculed by subordinates because he inadvertently implied that a certain grade of coal was used for industrial purposes. He knew it wasn't, but hadn't mastered his facts thoroughly enough to avoid the slip.

A chain-drugstore supervisor who had been promoted to store supervision from an office job was ridiculed on his district when he suggested, in November, that his managers feature fresh strawberry sundaes. The details had not yet become second nature to him. This was only one of several such errors, unimportant in fact but very serious in their effect on his managers and clerks.

Even one or two such slips may end the usefulness of an executive or seriously handicap him as a leader. Consequently, the executive without actual experience must be alert at all times to cover up his ignorance of minor details. For without a thorough knowledge of the job through experience or observation, an executive faces tremendous odds in his efforts to maintain respect.

The suggestions just offered deserve constant attention, for every executive is so likely to make

inadvertent mistakes which destroy respect that it is necessary to do everything possible to counteract the errors.

Respect is a vital factor in the relations of an executive with his employees. Without respect, the chances for leading them successfully are so much more difficult, if not impossible. And holding and winning respect is so easy that there is no reason for any determined executive to lack it.

The absence of respect makes it difficult to get instructions carried out, because lack of respect for the leader results in lack of respect for his instructions, while the existence of respect always is reflected in better acceptance of his instructions.

CHAPTER VIII

SELLING YOURSELF TO YOUR MEN—WINNING CONFIDENCE

The value of confidence has been widely advertised as a factor in the late depression. Its presence can work wonders; lack of it can cause great upheavals. Confidence has been the chief asset of the banker, the attorney, the physician, and the educator. It also is indispensable to the leader.

Everyone will agree that the widespread popularity of Franklin D. Roosevelt during his early days in office was a direct result of the confidence he inspired through the "fireside" chats. He radiated confidence, and millions of people had complete faith in his startling plans and ideas for that reason. Few leaders can hope to attain the degree of confidence which he so quickly developed, but anyone can use this tool to his own advantage by keeping two objectives in mind when dealing with subordinates:

First, guard against any actions which may tend to destroy confidence.

Second, take advantage of all opportunities to build up greater confidence.

Preventing Loss of Confidence

Although there are numerous ways in which executives may lose confidence, most authorities agree that the following are the most important points to watch:

Avoid Unfair Trade Practices. Confidence is so valuable that executives are warranted in giving it the closest of attention. And some executives who do so will find that they have been following policies which cannot fail to impair confidence. Foremost among those policies are the unfair and misleading practices which are followed in some lines of business. The executive who advises, or in any way influences, his salesmen to misrepresent the merchandise they sell, when they are aware of the misrepresentation, is certain to destroy their confidence in him. Some subordinates, of course, take such practices as a matter of course and think little about them. But the others, even though they may follow the advice, will question the integrity of the man who gives it. They reason that, if the executive departs from the truth in that way, many of the other things he tells them probably are equally untrue and unsound. And, in addition, the executive who openly advocates untruthfulness encourages the same tendency in his men.

In the retail business, it is a well-known fact that overcharging is practiced by some short-sighted

store managers. Even though it is done without the approval of executives, the employees often assume that the executives are aware of it and therefore must approve the practice. And since overcharging is generally considered dishonest, subordinates cannot be expected to have confidence in employers who permit the practice.

Misleading advertising has the same effect on subordinates. Salesmen often conclude that if the company makes false claims to the public about merchandise, it will mislead employees as well.

Also in this category are other practices which, while not dishonest or shady, are nevertheless fairly certain to destroy confidence on the part of subordinates. When, for example, a sales manager encourages his salesmen to unload stale or unsatisfactory or out-of-date merchandise on their customers, he need not be surprised when they lack confidence in, and disregard, other important instructions he gives them.

There apparently is doubt in the minds of some businessmen about whether it pays, in the long run, from a strictly dollar-and-cents viewpoint, to engage in illegitimate claims and practices. But there is no doubt that these practices destroy confidence of subordinates—a most valuable asset.

Thus, not only is it desirable to avoid unethical practices, but it is equally important to justify to subordinates any claims or policies which sound

suspicious. If, for example, a tooth-paste manufacturer announces to the public that he has discovered a way to brighten teeth which is superior to any way ever used before, it is only natural that some employees will be skeptical of the announcement and tend to lose confidence in the executives who issue it. Proving the fact will remove this suspicion and increase confidence instead of destroying it.

Face the Facts. The too common practice of sidestepping important issues invariably destroys the confidence of subordinates in their leader. Likewise, attempts to cover up management errors impair confidence quickly.

When an executive refuses to admit that a competitor has marketed a superior product, and there is no doubt about the fact in the minds of his salesmen, they reach one of two conclusions: either that the executive is trying to mislead them, or that he doesn't know what he's talking about. In either case, the executive loses their confidence.

The executive, of course, realizes that admitting the superiority of a competitor's merchandise would destroy confidence of his men in their own product, which would be undesirable. But a few minutes of clear thinking will show the executive that there is no need to risk the loss of confidence in either himself or his merchandise. If the competitor's product is not superior, he need only prove that

fact, and thus dispose of the subject. If it is superior, something will have to be done to meet the situation anyhow; the executive's own product must be improved, or the price must be reduced to put it back onto a competitive basis, or some other step must be taken. When the proper action can be taken immediately, that will settle the matter. If a delay is unavoidable, the executive can announce that he will investigate the facts thoroughly, avoiding any commitment until he has determined the best course to follow. At any rate, an unfounded contradiction of the charge, whether based on ignorance or an attempt to avoid the issue, is the worst solution of all.

Many executives lose the confidence of their men on relatively unimportant issues by leaving unanswered embarrassing questions which seem important to the subordinates.

A chain-store branch manager asked a group of store managers why they were losing sales volume. One manager stated that prices were too high on a group of staple items. Other managers agreed emphatically. The branch manager changed the subject and avoided the issue thereafter. His failure to face the situation, to explain why the managers were right or wrong, gave the men the impression that they were right but that their superior wouldn't admit it; that he was afraid to get further facts for fear he would have to commit himself on

an issue on which he was powerless to make a decision. It would have been far better for him to have said, "I'm glad to have your ideas. I want to check into those prices personally so that I can take up the full details with the home office. They like to have a vote on the prices of those items because they want to keep our prices uniform in all branches, if possible. I'll take this up with you again soon."

Such an explanation would have satisfied everyone. The failure to give an explanation or answer satisfied no one and made the men think less of the executive.

It is a common practice in some chain-store organizations to allot special sale merchandise to groups of stores, without consulting store managers, leaving it up to the supervisors or superintendents to persuade managers to take their full share of the merchandise if they complain. The supervisor who tries to bluff his way through by assuring his managers that they will have no trouble selling an excessive quantity of the items in question is sure to lose their confidence before very long if his allotments prove to be too large. They will judge him guilty either of not knowing how much merchandise could be sold or of deliberately trying to mislead them.

Bluffing, of course, is the quickest and easiest way to solve the immediate problem, although it is

the costliest method in the long run. But it is far better for the supervisor to handle the situation in some such way as this.

"Men, we have been given a pretty stiff quota of this merchandise. The office must feel we are real salesmen. I'll admit frankly, however, that we can't sell that much by ordinary methods. It won't sell itself. But we have the merchandise, we'll make a lot of profit when it's all sold, and therefore it deserves the best sort of selling job we have to offer. We'll want to give this merchandise precedence over everything else in the sale. I know we can surprise everybody if we go about the job this way. . . ."

The managers are likely to respond wholeheartedly to an appeal of that sort, whereas they would be certain to think less of their supervisor if he refused to admit that the job was a hard one.

Avoid Criticizing Superiors. The leader who blames other executives or his superiors for errors or for new policies which are disliked by his subordinates, lays himself open to suspicion, which quickly lowers confidence in himself. In addition, he destroys the confidence of his men in the company and thereby invites reduced efficiency.

In any business, there are bound to be many mistakes, oversights, delays, and unfortunate policies or rulings which irritate and perhaps handicap individuals in subordinate positions. These incidents

may also be irritating or inconvenient to the executive but he cannot afford to magnify them by joining his men in their complaints. For it always is possible to find some constructive explanation which will satisfy the men and make them forget the matter.

If, for example, truck drivers are handicapped by having to operate trucks with badly worn tires, the transportation superintendent invites disbelief and dissatisfaction if he blames the company in front of his drivers. It is much better, and just as easy, to explain that the company is trying to hold down expenses until business gets better, or that the company is anticipating a drop in tire prices within a short time, whatever the facts are.

If an instruction is issued by the top of an organization that salesmen must buy their own lunches when traveling out of town, and the sales manager blames the treasurer and agrees that the ruling is unwarranted, he sets his subordinates against the officials of the company or perhaps invites the suspicion that the sales manager is dodging blame for a decision of his own. Even a weak attempt to justify the ruling, when the executive himself does not favor it, is better than openly complaining before subordinates.

An executive who turns down a request for a salary increase by saying, "I think you deserve the increase and I tried to get it for you, but I

couldn't get it through; you know how the boss is," advertises the fact that his opinion doesn't carry much weight, even if his story is believed. A simple explanation of the reasons why the head of the organization refused the increase, together with a few words of encouragement, would be considerably more effective and would not jeopardize the subordinate's confidence.

Building Confidence

Since any executive may unwittingly make mistakes, large or small, which tend to destroy confidence, and since confidence is so important an element in building up the background of leadership needed to get instructions accepted properly, it is essential that every executive go out of his way to do things which will build it up.

Subordinates frequently mention the following points when explaining why they have faith in their executives:

Protect the Interests of Your Men. Subordinates want to feel that the man they work for has their welfare at heart; that he will stand up for them even at the risk of his own best interests. Thus, the assistant sales manager of a shoe concern won the confidence of two dozen salesmen overnight by insisting that a veteran salesman in the group be given credit for a large sale made to one of his inactive accounts by an official of the company,

although the salesman technically was not entitled to a commission. The salesman had called on the account three weeks before without getting an order. The assistant finally won the point, although he risked his standing by doing so. From that time on, he carried more weight with the salesmen than his immediate superior.

In another instance, a new salesman had been promised an increase at the end of sixty days if he was kept on the job after that time. Just before the sixty days were up, a 10 per cent pay cut was put through in the company. The new salesman was not cut but did not get his increase. Grasping the opportunity to build up confidence in his men without penalizing the company seriously, the sales manager made an issue of the case, cited the agreement, and got the increase, which probably should have been given anyway. The story got around quickly, and the sales manager profited substantially in improved confidence. He had demonstrated that he could be relied on to protect the interests of his salesmen.

Frequent opportunities arise for protecting the interests of subordinates who are criticized for doubtful or excusable mistakes. The publisher of a large city newspaper called the assistant day city editor and requested some information which he wanted immediately. Before the information could be furnished, an emergency arose and the city

editor assigned the assistant editor to a story which had to be handled promptly. Before the second assignment was completed, the publisher called back for his information and, when it was not ready, demanded that the assistant editor be discharged. The editor refused, explaining that the delay was unavoidable, and finally had his way. Confidence in the editor rose sharply, simply because he had the courage to protect a subordinate.

There probably is no more effective way to enhance confidence than by seeing that subordinates get what they are entitled to and making sure that they are treated fairly. It is by such means that some leaders attain a position where subordinates strike if the leaders are discharged.

Help Your Men Out When They Get into Trouble. An executive won the full confidence of an assistant shortly after taking over his position, and through the assistant quickly established himself with the rest of his staff, by helping the assistant out of serious trouble. The subordinate had run into a parking sign late one night and was jailed for reckless driving on the suspicion that he had been drinking. The executive was informed by another salesman and, although under no obligation to help, got out of bed at five o'clock in the morning to post a bond for the assistant. He could have sent the money to police headquarters or he could have gone down at nine o'clock and have gained

ample credit for giving assistance. Instead, he did the unexpected and was rewarded all the more completely. The assistant and other subordinates felt, after this incident, that they could rely on their superior to the limit.

Many executives point out, however, that it does not pay to seek credit for such assistance. They recognize the fact that subordinates do not want to be put in the position of owing gratitude for help received. They want to acknowledge the assistance voluntarily. Otherwise they are likely to resent it.

Likewise, experience has shown that unsolicited help of the wrong sort may do more harm than good. The executive who takes too much interest in the marital or financial affairs of his men often finds himself in an uncomfortable position. Confidence goes only to the executive who gives help which is wanted and is appreciated.

Get Things Done for Your Men—on Time. To be respected, an executive, or anyone else in charge of a group of individuals, should be sure to do what he promises to do for them and should make a determined effort to get done what needs to be done for them. The employee representatives in a large office filed a written complaint with the management to the effect that the office manager had promised to have a leak in the skylight fixed and had not done so. The vice-president in charge was amazed that employees could be so concerned

about such a trivial matter, particularly since he discovered that the leak did not inconvenience any one employee. But he learned in a round-table meeting that this was only one of a number of similar promises that had not been kept, many of them just as trivial.

Even when the executive is not immediately responsible for granting the request, it is important that he follow through and get action; otherwise, his subordinates get the idea that he lacks influence. If he is the one to make the final decision, it is all the more important to keep the agreement, because failure to do so implies carelessness on the executive's part and quickly reduces confidence in his ability.

In the rush of business, executives are likely to forget promises they make. But there is one good way to guard against such mistakes, and that is to write down all promises. If they are forgotten they may reach major importance, even though they otherwise amount to little.

It must be remembered, also, that a request which seems quite unimportant to the executive may be a serious matter in the mind of a subordinate, especially if the executive forgets about it. The very fact that a subordinate makes a request shows that it is important to him. And justified or not, a grievance is still a grievance and should be disposed of.

It may not make much difference to a corporation employing one hundred salesmen whether Pete Schulz gets the new set of samples he wants or not. But it does make a lot of difference to Pete. If he asks a second time and still doesn't get them, he naturally comes to believe that his wants don't count; that his superior doesn't have his interests in mind and can't be depended on.

A broken windshield on a salesman's automobile has little effect on the profits of a large concern, but it means the driver gets wet and cold and in a bad frame of mind. Little incidents like these have caused a good many executives to lose part of their effectiveness through loss of confidence. Indeed, some few executives go out of their way to get things done for their men; it is so easy to do them and so expensive not to.

Help Your Men Do Their Job Now and Then. Confidence also can be built up by helping a subordinate get a difficult job done.

A packing-house sales manager makes a regular practice of traveling every sales territory twice a year for a day or so, keeping in touch with the conditions his salesmen face and helping his men with their new or difficult accounts. Often, because of his prestige and sound sales methods, he is able to get a new customer started or to sell a large order.

"By selling a few orders for each man," he points out, "I not only keep my hand in, but I remind

the salesman that I know my job and his job, too. Then he is more likely to think I know what I'm talking about the next time he gets a sales letter or a selling suggestion."

Watching the boss use the methods he wants them to use invariably gives salesmen more confidence in those methods and usually speeds up the acceptance of new methods. That is why every man who is engaged in managing or training salesmen should get out on the job every so often. When the leader makes a plan work, the men he is trying to train are certain to have fewer doubts about the plan or the leader.

Executives agree unanimously, however, that they should never do a subordinate's routine work just to get the work done sooner. One particularly successful executive advises doing a man's work for him only when you are trying to accomplish something definite. If you need to show him how to do a job; if you can save money by doing it; or if you are trying to gain his confidence by showing him you know how to do a difficult job, go ahead. But don't help him with his work just because he has fallen behind, for the subordinate is likely to expect more such help in the future.

Listen to Subordinates' Complaints. Leaders who discourage complaints from their men usually are suspected of being uninterested, but too often they also are judged to be afraid to back up their

actions and policies. For the latter reason particularly, experienced executives are willing and anxious to answer complaints.

Not only does willingness to discuss complaints earn the executive a reputation for fairness, which is the basis of confidence, but also it gives him an opportunity to keep in touch with the sentiment of his subordinates and to detect dissension before it spreads too far.

Appear Confident. Success and assurance unquestionably inspire subordinates to have confidence in an executive. On the other hand, subordinates are not likely to have confidence in an executive who appears indecisive or worried.

On occasion, of course, any executive is likely to become discouraged, but it does not pay to reflect that attitude to the men who work for him. That is why every leader must be something of an actor, at least to the extent of being able to cover up his true feelings when he is discouraged, to appear confident and aggressive even when he feels quite the opposite.

An executive who does not reflect confidence invites his men to be suspicious of his ideas and to question policies. But if there appears to be no doubt in his mind as to the wisdom of his instructions, his men are likely to accept them without question.

Making Confidence a Goal

The more important factors in maintaining and building confidence have been discussed, and there are dozens of other points of lesser importance which play a part in determining whether subordinates have confidence in their superiors. Naturally, no executive can keep all these points in mind at all times, but his success with instructions and with other aspects of leadership will depend on how consistently he is able, consciously or unconsciously, to avoid the mistakes which kill confidence and to observe the practices which build it. For it must be remembered that one little slip, however unintentional, may undo years of good leadership. One untrue statement, one unjustified discharge, may sweep away confidence overnight.

Confidence is well worth working for and protecting, for a strong combination of other assets is needed to offset lack of confidence in anyone who hopes to lead and influence men.

CHAPTER IX

SELLING YOURSELF TO YOUR MEN—WINNING THEIR FRIENDSHIP

Respect and confidence alone, important as they are, do not complete the background an executive should endeavor to build up with his men in order to get best results with his instructions. For subordinates may respect and trust a leader and still not respond to him if they find him too cold and unfriendly. A friendly feeling toward the leader is a strong factor in personal loyalty. And particularly in emergencies, when blind acceptance of instructions or policies is required, loyalty is indispensable.

Every individual is more willing to do things, to put out extra effort, for people he likes than for those he dislikes or has no personal feeling for. Consequently, the leader who has won the friendship of subordinates will find them more willing and eager to do what he asks of them.

And since an executive must be friendly with his subordinates before he can expect them to feel friendly toward him, executives who make no effort to be amiable must necessarily go without the benefits which friendship produces.

Most executives recognize the value of friendship, but many deliberately make no effort to cultivate it for fear that their subordinates will take advantage of them. They have heard that familiarity breeds contempt, and interpret that vague aphorism to mean that employees will have less respect for the authority of an executive who establishes friendly relations with subordinates. Indeed, many executives deliberately conduct themselves in an unfriendly and even rude manner with subordinates to guard against familiarity.

Fortunately, however, those who fear the consequences of friendly relations need run no serious risk of having subordinates take advantage of them. To avoid unfortunate consequences it only is necessary, first, to distinguish between different kinds of friendship, and, second, to regulate the friendliness according to the reactions of the individual subordinate.

Two Types of Friendship

There are two distinctly different types of friendship: social and personal. The first is easily and frequently overdone. It will be discussed further at another point. The second type is neglected far more than it is overdone and seldom brings any disadvantages if the executive uses the simplest sort of good judgment.

If some individuals tend to relax their efforts when treated in a friendly manner, it is an easy matter to deal with them in a more impersonal fashion. Being friendly does not mean being weak. As already mentioned, an executive can be firm and pleasant at the same time and can use whatever mixture of firmness and pleasantness gets the best results from individual subordinates. Experience indicates that there are few, if any, subordinates with whom some degree of friendliness at the right time is not effective.

Thus, the executive who eats lunch alone because he is afraid his employees will take advantage of him if he eats with them, the man who never smiles because he is afraid his subordinates will think he is soft, are overlooking opportunities to build up personal loyalty and may be building up an unfriendly attitude which makes their job harder and less resultful.

Personal friendliness with subordinates follows much the same lines as friendliness with social acquaintances. Practicing it is largely a matter of observing these rules:

Be Cheerful. Cheerfulness is the opposite of grouchiness and despondency. Being cheerful is a friendly act, implying that the executive likes his subordinates. Being grouchy implies that the executive dislikes his employees. A frequent smile and cheerful attitude are worth while for other

reasons but are indispensable in building up friendliness.

An executive who is not conscious of the importance of cheerfulness is likely to let his attitude reflect his current moods. If he is feeling well and has just enjoyed some pleasant experience, he is cheerful. If he is depressed or discouraged or upset, he becomes grouchy, no matter with whom he is dealing. To maintain friendly relations with employees, however, it is necessary to pretend to be cheerful even when the executive has good reason to feel otherwise. That habit is difficult to establish but well worth the effort.

Be Sympathetic. Every individual craves sympathy and likes those who sympathize with him. In addition, he is likely to resent lack of sympathy when he feels that he deserves it.

Executives often are so preoccupied with important business affairs that they do not instinctively respond to the troubles of their employees. If a salesman has smashed his automobile or had it smashed through no fault of his own, that is an important loss to him; he wants sympathy. But he probably won't get it if the sales manager to whom he describes his hard luck has troubles of his own, in the form of poor sales volume or some similar difficulty. The sales manager is quite likely to dismiss the subject quickly in order to get on with his work. If he does, however, he is sure to leave

the salesman somewhat resentful and feeling that his superior is hardhearted.

The reason why executives so often fail to offer sympathy is because they do not consider the viewpoint of the subordinate. Unless the incident really impresses the executive, he pays little attention to it. The significant point to bear in mind, however, is that any trouble which is important to the subordinate is important enough for the executive to recognize and sympathize about, merely because of the beneficial effect on the employee. Just a few questions, and an expression of sympathy, usually are enough to create the desired effect on the subordinate.

Show an Interest in Your Men. Interest wins friends. It isn't enough to sympathize when subordinates are in trouble or to help them out when they are in a hole; to establish friendly relations, the executive should take an interest in the everyday things his men are interested in. Every shrewd executive knows how important it is to be interested in the things *his* superiors hold important. If the president of the company plays chess, it pays for his executives to express interest in chess now and then; if he likes to ride horses, it is a good idea to talk to him about horses.

The same plan works in reverse, so to speak. If your salesman takes in all the wrestling matches, ask him about them, talk about them, and perhaps

take him to a match now and then. If he raises goldfish or canary birds or collects stamps, ask about the hobby from time to time.

It isn't necessary or advisable to overdo it. Nor is it necessary, even though highly advisable, to be sincere. The executive can act a part if he has to, but should become interested if he possibly can. Then he will appear more sincere and will be less likely to neglect this essential step in leadership. In short, to get a man to like you, he must be interested in you. And to get him interested in you, you must be interested in him and in what he regards highly.

When your salesman or your stenographer drives up in a new car, notice it and, if you can, admire it. When your assistant has a new baby in his family, ask the name and remember to mention the child every few weeks. If a clerk has a tooth pulled or an appendix removed, let him know that you remember.

Showing interest in the ideas and suggestions of a subordinate is another easy way to build up friendly relations. Even when the suggestions are impractical or not worth adopting, close attention and consideration make the subordinate feel more important and more friendly. His ideas are important to him and he is certain to feel let down or discouraged if his superior rejects them abruptly. For that reason, many executives make it a rule

always to listen carefully to every suggestion and to ask a few questions before turning down a subordinate's suggestion. They sometimes reserve their decision until another day, just to further the impression that they value the employee's contribution.

Such things can be overdone, of course, but they are neglected far more often.

Be As Courteous with Your Men as You Would Be with Strangers. Do you habitually interrupt strangers when they are talking? Then don't do it to your men. Are you rude to businessmen you don't know well or to your intimate friends? If it doesn't pay with them, it's poor business with subordinates.

Get a group of chain-store managers together and ask them what type of courtesy is most important on the part of a supervisor. The first answer, almost every time, is this: "He should speak to all the clerks." This response not only indicates that those superiors customarily neglect to speak to the lower subordinates, but proves as well that such neglect registers heavily. The clerks must have mentioned it. The managers must have noticed it when they were clerks.

One of the courtesies which is hardest to carry out, but which counts most heavily, is to remember the names of subordinates. Many executives can recall, back in the days when they were fairly unim-

portant, the experience of having their names and faces forgotten by an executive whose attention they were eager to win. They can recall how unimportant and discouraged, and probably resentful, they felt.

To win the degree of friendship he wants and needs, every executive should make a point of remembering names and faces. That truth is accepted by every student and follower of good leadership. To forget names and faces is, in the eyes of subordinates, a discouraging discourtesy.

Executives who value friendliness are careful not to keep their men waiting for appointments and make it a point to rise and shake hands when employees whom they seldom see enter their offices for conferences. These little points make a real impression on men in the ranks.

Do Unnecessary Things for Your Men Occasionally. The necessary things must be done, but unnecessary help probably is even more important, because, being unnecessary, it is all the more appreciated and definitely shows a friendly attitude.

Again the executive's own experience will bear out the truth of this assertion. The waitress who hands the customer a menu and brings his food is doing only what she must do to get his money. She attracts little attention. But the girl who brushes off the customer's chair before he sits down, who unfolds his napkin, and who offers a second cup

of coffee is the one who is noticed and appreciated because she is extending courtesies that are unnecessary.

The merchandise manager of a department store tells how he won over a veteran employee with this device:

"When I took over my position, this man would have nothing to do with me. He had hoped to get the job or, at least, expected to receive a promotion as a result of the vacancy, so that my appointment from the outside was a disappointment. Since I was a newcomer, he chose to believe that I didn't have the qualifications for the position.

"I tried a number of methods of winning him over, with no results. Finally, I happened to stay late one night and passed his desk as I was leaving. He was puzzling over a stock sheet, trying to balance it with an earlier inventory.

"Walking over to his desk, I said, 'I see you have your troubles, too.'

"I caught him off guard. 'I've been working on this for two hours,' he replied. 'I can't figure out what's wrong.'

"I offered to help him and found the error, a wrong extension, in five minutes. He thanked me heartily. I made it a point to say that errors like that are hard to find if you pass them over the first time, so that he would feel that the error was perfectly natural.

"That was the turning point. Because I had done him an unnecessary favor, after hours, something that was none of my responsibility, I at least partly gained his personal regard. He doesn't exactly like me yet, but he has developed a much better attitude."

In some cases, it unquestionably pays for the executive to go out of his way and inconvenience himself to do unnecessary favors for his men. A sales manager found that one of his men wished to attend a boxing match but had been unable to obtain tickets. The salesman was a radical and had been pretty hard for the superior to handle. Being anxious to win over the subordinate, the sales manager sold him two tickets of his own, with the excuse that he had work to do, although he actually was just as anxious to see the match as the salesman.

Neither of these men was in any way obliged to do the favor. In each case, the act was performed for one purpose—to gain the friendly regard of a man who had not been won over by other methods.

Such acts need not always be entirely one-sided in benefit. The recently appointed manager of a typewriter concern had a salesman who felt that the superior had a grudge against him. One day, the manager, who was anxious to establish himself with the salesman, noticed that the man was charged with twenty used typewriters which had

been traded in over a year before and which he was responsible for selling.

A customer came in looking for some inexpensive typewriters and the manager succeeded in selling all twenty of the salesman's white elephants. He didn't say a word to the salesman, but the latter came in a few days later after he had received the report and thanked the manager, almost with tears in his eyes. The salesman had $150 in commissions tied up in the old typewriters and needed the money badly. This one good turn, which was entirely unnecessary, made him a loyal supporter. And the transaction also relieved the company of a liability.

Unnecessary assistance along these lines builds friendly relations because it proves that the superior considers the employee important enough to go out of his way for. And the subordinate reciprocates by developing better personal liking for the executive in turn.

It must be granted that this device can be overdone. Too much unnecessary assistance may give the impression that the executive is trying to curry favor or may give other men the impression that he is playing favorites. But instances of overdoing it are quite rare, compared to the cases where the practice has been completely neglected.

Be Impartial; Avoid Prejudices and Favoritism. Prejudice means, for all practical purposes, arriving at conclusions or opinions on insufficient evidence.

Favoritism means giving an individual a greater number of privileges than his performance entitles him to. Either tendency is exceedingly dangerous.

Except when employing or promoting relatives and personal friends, executives seldom are guilty of favoritism, but they are accused of it in many instances because they have failed to observe a highly important rule: justify your choice at the time you make the move.

If a relatively new man or young man is to be promoted or transferred to a choice territory, the sales manager can feel certain of encountering trouble unless he takes steps to forestall it. And the most effective way to do that is to discuss the man's record with several subordinates whose opinions carry weight with others. If the man you have selected has lowered his sales cost, increased his volume, exceeded a stiff sales quota, or obtained an impressive number of new accounts—those are the facts which should be brought out. True, it is the privilege of every executive to make his own selections and he is not obliged to consult his subordinates in doing so, but the thoughtful executive knows that a choice which is unjustified in the eyes of his men will injure morale seriously and appear as an unfriendly and unwise act until it is justified.

Prejudice is a common failing on the part of many leaders. Good men often are rated down, and weak men are given credit for abilities they do not

possess, simply because the individuals have at some time or other done something which has strongly influenced the leader for or against them.

Since prejudice is, by definition, an unconscious rather than a deliberate mistake, there is only one way to guard against it, aside from thorough consideration of the real merits of each case, and the prejudice may persist even then. The best solution is for the executive always to check his selections with some other individual whose opinion he respects, if he suspects that he may be influenced by prejudice.

The possibilities for advancement or self-improvement play a large part in maintaining morale among subordinates. The leader who gives his men an excuse for believing him to be partial or prejudiced is certain to injure morale, and the fact that he favors certain men, or seems to, makes him appear unfriendly to the remaining men.

The Problem of Social Friendship

Many an executive has had cause to regret social contacts with business associates, particularly with subordinates. They have had quarrels and other regrettable experiences as the result of poker games; they have talked too much or said the wrong thing at convivial parties; and they have had subordinates take advantage of them in various ways as a result of social contacts.

For those reasons and others, most executives prefer to keep almost entirely apart from subordinates outside of business. And for most leaders that is a wise policy because the risks of unpleasant consequences are great and because the right sort of friendliness during business hours is sufficient to establish the desired relationship.

However, the problem deserves further consideration because there usually must be some few exceptions and because some executives happen to have the right knack for using social relations to increase the friendly feeling of their employees. The exceptions arise when the subordinates as a group are having a social gathering and when the leader and subordinates are thrown together away from home. Executives who refuse to appear at group gatherings usually hurt themselves. Depending on past experience, they should at least appear and then leave whenever good judgment dictates. Indeed all superiors should put in an appearance at such gatherings, not just the immediate superior. Employees invariably feel let down if executives ignore their invitations. They assume that the executives do not feel friendly, and they are likely to reciprocate the feeling.

An immediate superior can seldom afford to avoid an employee when both are traveling and staying at the same hotel. If there is any likelihood of the employee's presuming too far, it is an easy

matter to keep the conversation entirely on the subject of business.

Some executives can mingle with their employees in card games and in other recreation and do themselves a world of good, winning the credit for being a "good fellow." Others cannot afford to take the chance. Anyone who is not sure of his ability to mix with subordinates on such a basis is wise to go slow and take no dangerous chances.

It is particularly necessary, in all social relationships, that the executive guard against the appearance of favoritism. For example, if he and his wife mix socially with one or two out of a large group of subordinates, the others are certain to resent their omission. Accordingly, unless the number of subordinates is so few that the executive is able to treat them all alike in this respect, or unless there is some good excuse for singling out a few, it is better to seek social contacts elsewhere. Jealousy, based on real or suspected favoritism, is certain to create an unfriendly feeling among the subordinates who are not included.

In summary, the desirability of friendliness is best appreciated by weighing it against the alternative—unfriendliness. The latter certainly is undesirable. And since there is no clear-cut middle ground, the safest policy is to go in the friendly direction as far as seems safe, stopping short of the point where subordinates threaten to presume on the relationship.

Chapter X

SELLING YOURSELF TO YOUR MEN—CONCLUSION

The executive who consistently observed all the practices discussed and advocated in the three preceding chapters would stand out far above all fellow executives. That is another way of saying that no executive observes all the "rules" of good leadership, and there are two reasons why this is true:

> *First*, no one can remember all the rules, because his mind will be on other things much of the time.
>
> *Second*, no individual has good enough self-control to be able to refrain from making numerous mistakes. An executive who is in a hurry to get a job done or to get an interview over with is quite likely to forget to give praise. He may dismiss suggestions arbitrarily. He may violate any of the precepts of leadership in his desire to get quick action.

Many individuals have insisted that leadership could not be taught and have assumed that it is a quality which some men possess by accident,

because they have observed that the successful leaders they know use radically different methods. However, those differences, which unquestionably exist, are easily explained and in no sense invalidate the discussion so far.

It is only natural that no two executives lead just alike, because no two things ever are alike. They can't be, according to the laws of mathematics. No two leaders use identical methods for the simple reason that personalities differ greatly, and those differences are reflected in leadership methods.

For example, some leaders are not socially inclined by nature. They are unable, because of habit and general disposition, to be genuinely friendly or cheerful with other people. If they try deliberately to change, the results often are not satisfactory. They may lose their effectiveness entirely when they stop being natural. Yet these executives get results, in spite of being unfriendly or not being friendly in a positive way, because they have other characteristics which enable them to stand out. Of four executives occupying identical positions in one large concern—men who get especially good results—these characteristics are outstanding:

—One man is rather cold, but he is firm and unusually reasonable and has earned a reputation for knowing his job thoroughly.

—A second man knows little about his job technically, but is particularly well liked because of his warm personality, sympathy, and fairness, and gets his results largely for those reasons.

—Another is aloof and somewhat unreasonable, but gets results because he is wise enough to appear greatly interested in the welfare of his men.

—The fourth is sarcastic and disinterested, but knows his job and the job of his men thoroughly and knows how to build up enthusiasm to a high pitch.

Each of these men, like all other executives, has pronounced weaknesses, but achieves success because he possesses to a high degree some few characteristics which make him stand out. Unquestionably, each of these men would get still better results if he were to analyze his shortcomings and make a determined effort to overcome them. Indeed, one of them did so in part. He had fallen into the habit of being harsh, overcritical, and impatient, but when a promotion depended on eliminating these faults, he succeeded in overcoming them almost completely.

Every organization of any size contains executives who disregard many of the more important rules of good leadership and yet obtain better than

average results from their instructions, because they have some one or two pronounced positive, favorable qualities. Subordinates will overlook a good many shortcomings in an executive if he stands out sufficiently in some respect which is lacking in most of the executives they know. For example, one extremely impatient, critical individual got good enough results to enable him to climb next to the top in a large concern because the men who worked for him appreciated his decisiveness and his willingness to admit his mistakes. That executive is cordially disliked, but men under him respect him and have considerable confidence in him. His shortcomings are tolerated because he offers other qualities which are valued.

Another genuinely successful executive becomes openly contemptuous when his subordinates make mistakes or disregard an instruction, but he is so brilliant in his own work and so hard a worker that he wins the respect of most of the men who report to him.

Inexperienced executives who are poorly informed about their jobs, and consequently make many foolish mistakes in judgment which their subordinates all recognize, sometimes can get better than average results. By being particularly considerate, by using praise freely, or by similar means, they call forth the best efforts of their employees in spite of the errors they themselves make.

Subordinates occasionally will overlook serious personal faults in a leader and still follow out his instructions. One of the most promising younger executives in a chain organization not only drives his men consistently by asking too much of them, but also is known to be untruthful in emergencies. He gets results, though, because he will do everything in his power to help them make sales and will defend their rights vigorously with higher officials of the organization.

A high-ranking executive in another concern refuses to consider suggestions from his subordinates and verbally abuses individuals who bring up complaints. But because most of his instructions and policies are unquestionably sound and because he is unusually friendly until his judgment is questioned, he is more successful on the whole than many other more reasonable executives.

Appropriating subordinates' ideas and getting credit for them as his own is the bad habit of another leader. In addition, he frequently denies having approved ideas which work out poorly. Yet he apparently makes up for these shortcomings by a wide margin, because of his ability to get things done for his men and his willingness to give them personal help with their problems.

Most leaders could increase their effectiveness, with instructions and otherwise, by setting out on a consistent program of self-improvement,

but no one could make himself perfect or even reasonably perfect because each individual has personality faults or weaknesses which are deep-rooted.

Accordingly, since every executive, successful or unsuccessful, constantly is going to make mistakes which tend to reduce his effectiveness as a leader, it is highly desirable to make every effort to conduct this three-point program:

1. Become conscious of as many shortcomings and bad leadership habits as possible and try to correct each of them.
2. Take full advantage of every opportunity to use good leadership tactics which have been neglected.
3. Develop a reputation for possessing some one or more desirable characteristics, by practicing them consistently.

The good leadership practices will help counteract the mistakes and poor practices. The more good methods an executive can adopt, the better his results will be. The objective is to make the good practices outbalance the bad ones as far as possible, recognizing that the bad practices exist and that everything possible should be done to offset them.

Except in the case of individuals who are unusually strong-willed, improvement necessarily comes rather slowly. There will be some bad habits to replace with good ones, there will be new habits

to adopt, and habits are hard to change or establish deliberately. In spite of the likelihood of slow progress, however, every executive should find the effort worth while because the good practices are, for the most part, easy to follow and because the improvement will mean so much in getting better performance on instructions and plans.

Subordinates do not expect their superiors to be perfect. Experience has taught them that every superior has weaknesses. From their viewpoint, the weaknesses usually predominate and the good points are relatively few. Hence, when they find an executive who definitely makes frequent good impressions—who consistently applies the steps which build respect, confidence, and friendly relations—they are quick to notice his good qualities and to respond to them.

Chapter XI

PRESENTING INSTRUCTIONS SKILLFULLY

When an executive has succeeded in establishing the right kind of a background with his subordinates, the job of getting instructions and policies carried out automatically becomes considerably easier. Subordinates often will carry out objectionable instructions without hesitation when they are issued by an executive who has established a background such as that just described, whereas another executive, whose men do not have the same attitude toward him, may be totally unable to make any progress with the same instructions.

However, it seldom is wise to rely entirely on confidence, respect, and friendship to insure acceptance of an instruction, no matter how simple or acceptable it may be. For it is quite likely that important instructions may be disregarded at a critical time because of a sudden change in attitude toward the executive or other reasons which will be discussed later. In emergencies, of course, when time is short, any executive is warranted in issuing

instructions with the minimum of trouble. But experience shows that, when time permits, it is highly desirable to take further precautions to insure proper observance of the instructions.

For clarity, the process of issuing an instruction has been broken down into these steps:

1. Testing the desirability of the instruction.
2. Defining the instruction carefully.
3. Explaining how to carry out the instruction.
4. Selling the importance of the instruction.

What about the Instruction Itself?

Before undertaking to issue an instruction, the first step is to consider the plan or idea carefully in order to decide whether it will be carried out properly. This precaution is exceedingly important because an instruction which is disregarded not only fails to get results but usually does considerable harm. Indeed, when an instruction is issued but is not carried out, some or all of the following consequences may be encountered:

1. Time and effort are wasted, on the part of both the superior and his subordinate.
2. Subordinates usually are confused during the period while the instruction presumably is in force.
3. The superior loses prestige because of the failure of his instruction.

4. It becomes harder to get future instructions carried out.

The first two points are self-explanatory. The third point, loss of prestige by the executive, is more important than most superiors realize. When an executive issues an instruction and is unable to get it executed, he is almost certain to lose respect among his subordinates and to appear less effective in their eyes. And even if the superior himself does not lose prestige, the fourth point usually does materialize; once an executive permits his instructions to be disregarded, his subordinates are quite likely to get the idea that they can disregard future instructions also. The more often an executive permits instructions to be disregarded, the harder it becomes to get future instructions observed.

Therefore, to avoid the consequences of unsuccessful instructions, it is important that every new idea be checked over carefully. The first question to ask is whether the instruction will be accepted readily by subordinates. If it will not, the executive should consider delaying or forgetting about it. But before doing so, he will want to consider whether the instruction is really important. If it definitely is important and necessary he probably will want to go ahead even though he anticipates trouble in getting it carried out.

Many instructions, however, do not seem so important or necessary when they are given further consideration, for one of the following reasons:

1. The new instruction may conflict with other standing policies.
2. The new instruction may take more time than it is worth.
3. Time spent on this instruction may prevent employees from giving necessary attention to more important ideas.

The relative importance of the instruction and the readiness with which it will be carried out necessarily determine the tactics of the executive. If the instruction is not sufficiently important, compared with other pressing matters, he naturally will delay it or let it drop entirely. On the other hand, if the executive decides that it is important, but that it will not be accepted readily, he can adopt one of two courses:

—Undertake a skillful job of introducing and selling the instruction.
—Issue the instruction as a suggestion.

It has been pointed out that once an instruction is issued, the executive must follow through and get results or else lose ground with his subordinates. A suggestion, however, is not considered in the same light as an instruction. An executive may

hand out suggestions freely, if he really presents them as suggestions, and encounter no unfortunate effects in case they are disregarded.

In addition, there are other advantages in using the device of suggestion instead of giving instructions. These advantages are discussed in a later chapter.

This method will fail, of course, if the executive so conducts himself that his subordinates regard his suggestions as orders or instructions. But if subordinates consider suggestions for what they really are and feel free to adopt or reject them, the executive can introduce a difficult instruction and feel his way along without any risk of starting something he will be unable to finish. Inasmuch as unsuccessful instructions handicap an executive seriously, the policy of giving suggestions probably should be followed much more widely than it is in introducing difficult instructions that are desirable but not essential.

In summary, proposed instructions which will not work should be dropped, temporarily or permanently. Those which are likely to be resisted should be issued as suggestions if they are not urgent. And all instructions, difficult or easy, should be issued carefully, to insure proper observance by subordinates.

Chapter XII

STATING INSTRUCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

Questioning subordinates in large organizations reveals that a surprisingly high percentage of instructions are disregarded or carried out improperly because the plans or ideas are not understood. Review of written instructions shows that many of the simplest new ideas are issued so casually that they fail to give the full information subordinates need to carry them out. That usually is because the executive has become so familiar with what he wants done that it seems quite simple, with the result that he assumes too much understanding on the part of his employees.

Analysis of instructions found on bulletin boards and in letters to employees indicates that there are five obvious but important rules which should be observed more carefully:

1. Make instructions clear.
2. Make them brief.
3. Make them easy to read.
4. Make them complete.
5. Make them easy to remember.

Clarity merely is a matter of using simple, easily understood language and correct grammar. Brevity means saying only what is necessary, being careful not to include so much detail that the instruction is too long to invite careful reading. Some concerns have found that it is best, when issuing complicated instructions, to send out first a brief over-all explanation and then follow up with one or more supplementary and explanatory statements.

To insure ease of reading it is advisable to avoid multiple carbon copies and handwritten memoranda, and to discuss each separate instruction or idea in a separate paragraph.

Making Instructions Complete

The fourth point, completeness, is where most instructions fail. Yet missing facts can be detected quickly by testing each instruction for the answers to these questions:

Who?
What?
When?
Where?
Why?
How?

The latter two questions will be discussed more fully in succeeding chapters. The others are quite

self-explanatory but play an important part in any instruction.

To illustrate the importance of testing even the most simple instructions, consider this one, which has been issued many times: "Please turn out the lights."

There is no doubt about what is to be done when one has read that instruction, but who is to turn out the lights, which lights are included, which lights are to be turned out by each individual? Indeed, "What?" is the only question that request does make clear.

So vague an instruction usually gets decidedly poor results, but if it had been worded as follows, no one could fail to understand it:

"Each employee (who) in the office (where) is requested to turn out the lights (what) over or in front of his desk (where) when leaving the office for lunch and in the evening (when). Your cooperation will reduce unnecessary light bills materially (why)."

Or to cite another example, consider this instruction: "Please bring your car in for semiannual inspection."

Again, "What" is the only question answered. The salesman must figure out the rest for himself if he is to observe the instruction. The need for follow-up letters, and delay in the inspection, could be reduced materially if the instruction were worded:

"To guard against accidents or costly repairs (why), please bring your car (what) to the shop in the rear of the garage (where) for semiannual inspection before April 9 (when)."

It perhaps seems unnecessary to pay so much attention to simple instructions. But if the instruction is worth issuing, it is worth the two or three additional minutes needed to make sure it is complete. After all, no one can be expected to carry out a request satisfactorily if he does not understand it or if he has to guess at the details. The same need for being complete exists whether instructions are written or oral.

Making Instructions Easy to Remember

Instructions, like books, plays, and merchandise, sell most easily when they have names. And when an instruction or an idea involves a series of steps, it is especially important to tie all the steps together with a central idea to which a name can be attached.

It is a well-known fact that men can remember one thing much better than they can remember ten things or even five. Therefore, if the new plan of selling or the new program of safety or any other program is associated with an attention-getting, impressive, and interesting name, the mere recall or mention of the name helps to bring back all the various steps which make up the plan.

Giving a name to a new plan also has the further advantage of dignifying the idea and making it seem more substantial to those for whom it is intended. And a little ballyhoo often is the one thing that is needed to make a plan stand out, gain attention, and win action.

Obviously, names chosen for this purpose should be sales-slanted, not just descriptive. Thus, the One-new-customer-daily plan is much better than the plan called Ten-points-about-selling-sweepers; the Three-call-plan-for-selling-trucks appeals much more than the Manual-on-truck-selling.

Use of Written Instructions

Many executives avoid written instructions when possible, on the grounds that they are an unnecessary formality. In certain instances, that is true, yet written instructions are both desirable and necessary under certain conditions:

—When action on the instruction is to be deferred, a written memorandum is needed to serve as a reminder at the proper time.

—When several instructions are issued at one time, a written record is needed to guard against the possibility that subordinates may forget or lose sight of some of them.

—When the instruction is complicated, it should be in writing to enable subordinates to study the details.

Every time one subordinate disregards an instruction through failure to understand it, the time required to follow-up and clear up the misunderstanding is greater than the time required to make the instruction entirely clear in the first place. And since such misunderstandings occur frequently, it unquestionably pays to take the necessary time to consider instructions carefully before they are issued and to make sure they are at least clear and complete.

Chapter XIII

EXPLAINING HOW TO DO THE JOB

Just as a subordinate cannot carry out an instruction if he doesn't understand what he is expected to do, he also cannot carry it out if he doesn't know how. But dozens of instructions which are issued every year in large organizations cannot be put into effect for that very reason.

Executives, particularly those who once performed the job being done by their subordinates, are quite likely to overestimate the ability of subordinates to figure methods out for themselves, because careful study and experience have made the job seem so easy and clear to the executives. Other superiors deliberately skip the task of explaining how to carry out instructions because they don't care to take the time to figure out the answer in detail.

Organizations ask employees over and over to do certain things which the employees understand inadequately or not at all. In many cases, the instructions have been issued so many times that no one thinks to question whether or not subordinates know how. Some such instructions are:

"Show an interest in your customers."

"Be courteous to customers."

"Act confident when approaching customers."

"Be enthusiastic."

Those instructions sound quite simple. They have been repeated time and again. But extremely few executives could explain on paper or verbally just what they mean by showing interest in customers. Most leaders would have considerable difficulty in telling a subordinate what they mean by acting confident and being enthusiastic. Most people could give a partial description of courtesy, but a reasonably complete explanation would require considerable effort on the part of most executives. And it stands to reason that, if it is difficult for executives to tell how to carry out such instructions, it is fully as hard and probably much harder for subordinates to figure out the answers for themselves.

Some instructions, of course, need no such explanation. Everyone is sure to know how to turn out lights, how to mail a report on Saturday instead of Monday, and how to smile at every customer. Therefore, there is no need spending time to explain such instructions.

On the other hand, a salesman may or may not know how to "get the customer down to the hotel to look over your line." Moreover, he may hesitate to admit that he doesn't know how, especially if

he observes that his fellow salesmen are not asking any questions. Or he may think he knows how when he doesn't. If the sales manager knows one or several effective ways to get customers to a hotel, he should give his salesmen the benefit of his knowledge unless he is sure they don't need help. If the sales manager doesn't know how, he should figure out a practical method before issuing the instruction.

Along the same line, a department-store salesgirl may know how to fit gloves on a customer or she may not. In a group of sales girls, half or a third or none may know.

A drugstore fountain clerk may know how to wash dishes properly, or he may use a method which takes too much time, or he may wash the dishes without getting them clean.

Unless he has had an opportunity to watch his subordinates doing the job covered by his instructions, an executive usually cannot be sure whether they know how. And since it is essential that they do know, he should make sure when the instruction is issued, which he can do in one of four ways:

1. By telling them how, if the instruction is easy to explain verbally.
2. By showing them how, if the instruction is at all complicated.
3. By asking them how, if he thinks they know, but isn't sure.

4. By watching them, if the method is complicated.

Making Explanations Clear

In case the executive fears he may be insulting the intelligence of his subordinates by telling them how to do apparently simple jobs, asking them to tell him how they would do the jobs is an easy way to avoid any such implication. If the subordinates can explain or demonstrate satisfactorily how to do the jobs, the point is settled. If they cannot, the leader knows what he wished to find out and can then take steps to give the necessary explanations.

Actual demonstration by the leader often is required, but demonstration alone is not sufficient in most cases. Few individuals can learn a job by watching someone else perform it unless the job is so simple that demonstration is superfluous. To understand this fact, it only is necessary for the executive to watch a truck driver back a truck and trailer into a loading platform. He can see every move, the process is not hurried, and yet it would be most difficult to explain or duplicate the maneuvers without a number of unsuccessful trials.

In the same way, many ideas which are explained and demonstrated to subordinates miss the mark completely. Repeated demonstrations, plus explanation, often are needed. The amount of repetition required can best be determined by watching

the subordinate try to carry out the instruction after the initial demonstration.

An instruction which employees do not know how to carry out is doomed to failure and may cause definite harm if wrong methods are used which antagonize customers or cause subordinates to work inefficiently. Consequently, time spent explaining instructions seldom is wasted.

Chapter XIV

SELLING INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBORDINATES

Selling instructions to employees is no more important than making instructions clear or explaining how to execute them, but it is considerably more difficult in the case of most instructions given to salesmen and others who do not work under close supervision on standardized, repetitive jobs.

Occasionally, of course, instructions fit in so well with the wishes of subordinates that they are adopted enthusiastically without delay. Other instructions are not welcomed, but are not opposed, and go into effect without much trouble. It is safe to say, however, that 90 per cent of the instructions or policies which require employees to change their present ways of working or which require extra time or effort either are observed only in part or are largely disregarded until a competent job of selling is done by the superior.

To illustrate, it is perfectly safe to say that not more than one subordinate out of ten will observe the following instructions without skillful salesmanship by the executive.

Wholesale Salesmen.

Mention our radio program to every customer visited.

Request a list of five prospects from every customer called on.

Call on three new prospects every day.

Use your new portfolio in every interview.

Check each dealer's stock carefully.

Chain Grocery-store Managers.

Change all counter displays daily.

Dust all shelf merchandise once a week.

Wash outside windows daily.

Suggest bread to every adult customer.

Department-store Salesgirls.

Smile at every customer.

Invite every customer to visit the furniture department.

Filling-station Attendants.

Offer to inspect the windshield wiper on every car serviced.

Try to sell extra fuses to every customer.

Touch your hat when addressing customers.

It will be noticed that all the instructions just listed call for extra effort, for doing things that presumably have not been done before. In other words, they are calculated to make the subordi-

nate's job harder or at least more complicated. Such instructions are the most difficult of all to get observed, but other instructions which merely call for a change of procedure often are just as hard to effect.

The basic reason has been mentioned—lack of appreciation of their jobs on the part of subordinates, which prompts them to reject instructions which they do not happen to be definitely interested in observing.

There are times, of course, when circumstances prevent the observance of an instruction. The employee may have the best of intentions but be prevented from carrying it out by the press of other more important work, by his inability to get necessary cooperation from others, or by illness. But such circumstances do not occur frequently.

In the other instances, the general reasons, as previously mentioned, are lack of incentive, lack of interest, and actual opposition to the instruction. Even though the subordinate may have no objection to an instruction, the fact that he does not actively favor it may result in his neglecting the instruction, deliberately or otherwise.

Thus, if a chain-grocery or drugstore manager is instructed to stop using Form 666*a* at the end of the month and to start using Form 666*b*, a job which requires little or no extra effort, he may fail to do so, even though he has no objection whatso-

ever to the instruction. The trouble is that he has no active reason for observing it, at least no reason that to him is sufficiently important. The fact that he was asked to change is not sufficient incentive in many instances.

In searching for the reason why the instruction was disregarded, several possibilities can be singled out quickly. The explanation might be any one of the following:

—He forgot.

—He was in the habit of using the old form and kept on using it automatically without thinking.

—He could see no reason for making the change.

—He was in a hurry and used the first form that he could locate.

—He thought he had used the new form, but used the old one by mistake.

These reasons often are given, but they all mean the same thing, that the instruction was not sufficiently important to the subordinate. If he had considered it urgent, he would not have forgotten it, because we do not overlook things which really are important to us. A salesman who is low in funds seldom forgets to send in his expense account on time. A truck driver does not forget to

report that his truck is hard to steer. A waitress seldom forgets to quit work on time. By the same token, a store manager does not forget to use a new form if he considers it really important.

Habits are hard to change, as everyone knows from personal experience. When a store manager has been in the habit of using one form for several months, or years, he develops the habit of using it and the habit is hard to change—unless he really wants to change it, unless he is definitely interested in making the change. Without that interest, the instruction does not stay in his mind and habit goes on working.

The third reason, that the subordinate saw no good reason for the change, is self-explanatory; naturally he was not interested. The next explanation, that he was in a hurry, is a clear-cut example of lack of interest. Hurry is purely relative. A subordinate seldom is in too much of a hurry to stop for his pay check. If the job in front of us is important enough, it takes precedence when we are pressed for time. The job that gets slighted when we hurry is the job which appears unimportant, the job we are least interested in.

The same reasoning holds true of the last reason, the mistake. We make many fewer mistakes about things in which we are interested because we use more care. Mistakes clearly indicate lack of interest in many more cases than not.

Accordingly, unless the executive is certain that his men will be interested in carrying out an instruction, or unless he is sure that they will carry it out because of their personal regard for him, it is desirable to make a definite attempt to build up interest in the instruction, or to "sell" the instruction to the subordinates. By doing so, it may be possible to make the instruction seem so desirable that those employees who are the least interested in their jobs will observe it.

And if there is reason to suspect that there may be active opposition, as there often is to instructions which call for extra work, it becomes essential to sell the instruction.

Selling From the Right Viewpoint

Selling instructions involves two steps:

1. Convincing subordinates that the instruction is necessary.
2. Convincing them that it is sound.

Many executives who have tried to sell instructions have abandoned the practice, except for mere explanations of the reasons for the instructions, because they have found that subordinates are too hard to sell. They have not succeeded in effecting a meeting of the minds. And in most cases the reason is not hard to find. Instructions have been hard to sell because executives in too many in-

stances have sold from their viewpoint or the company's, instead of selling from the *subordinates'* viewpoint.

Suppose, for example, that a sales manager for a tire manufacturer is advised that there is an excessive inventory on repair kits and is asked to get the surplus into dealers' hands. At his next sales meeting, he might say: "Men, we are badly overstocked on repair kits. As you can realize, the company has a lot of money tied up in these kits and we have to get those stocks down. The stock isn't old and they shouldn't be hard to sell. I want every man to place twenty dozen of these kits during the next two weeks."

After that rather typical request, it is unlikely that many of the salesmen would do a really thorough job of trying to sell the repair kits. The excessive stocks are the company's problem, not theirs.

But suppose that the sales manager had covered the subject in this way: "Men, I've just noticed that we've been overlooking a good bet in our repair kits. Shipments during the last thirty days have been less than half what they were last year. Dealers have stopped ordering them with the idea that they can send in a rush order when their stock runs out. The dealer stocks I've checked during the last few weeks have been extremely light. And you know what happens when the dealer's stock

runs down. Either he loses the sales or he gets the kits from the first salesman who calls. In either case, we probably lose out. Each average sale means nearly two dollars in commissions. We have twenty dozen kits per salesman in stock. That means each of you can make an extra thirty dollars or more if you'll sell your share of the stock during the next two weeks. Here's the way I'd go about it. . . ."

The first method tells what the company will gain. The second tells what the salesman will gain, and that method is certain to produce better results. Careful thinking always will show one or more ways by which the subordinate will profit from any instruction and that is what he is interested in. Consciously or unconsciously, he asks himself: "What will I get out of it? What will I gain?" He may, of course, follow the instruction even though he expects to gain nothing, but the chances are against it.

Almost every instruction offers some advantage to the subordinate. Some of the general advantages are:

—Greater earnings.
—Less work.
—Personal prestige.
—Less grief in the future.
—Saving of time.
—Greater security.

In addition, there are other benefits, peculiar to individual instructions, which will appeal to subordinates. One instruction may mean that he will get his expense check sooner if he sends his expense sheets in on time. He is more interested in that than in saving clerical cost in the office. Another instruction may mean that he will get prompter deliveries on merchandise he sells if he prints names and addresses on his order forms. That interests him more than saving time in the office.

Whatever the instruction is, it can be sold more quickly and more surely if the executive points out what the subordinate will gain, than if he dwells on the benefits to the company.

Frequently, not only the instruction itself but also the methods involved must be sold in the same way. A group of salesmen may agree that new customers are needed but may disagree on the best methods of getting them. And not until they are convinced that they will get better or easier results from the methods recommended will they be interested in using those methods. The best way, to them, is the way they know best. They will resist new methods until they become satisfied that those methods are better.

Selling with Demonstrations

Many instructions cannot be sold readily because the subordinates are unable to appreciate them

properly from a verbal description or explanation. In such cases, it becomes necessary to prove by actual demonstration that the instructions are sound.

One packing-house sales manager, for example, furnished his salesmen large display pieces for dealers' windows and asked that they be installed promptly. The salesmen objected that the displays were too large and that dealers would not accept them. When arguments made no headway, the sales manager went out with three salesmen and placed the displays without trouble in half the stores visited. That satisfied the skeptical salesmen and their objections disappeared.

In one sense, the sales manager's demonstration meant showing the salesmen how to do the job, but actually he was selling them on the fact that it could be accomplished. Their objections were not a result of feeling they didn't know how; they felt it couldn't be done at all.

Testimonials from other subordinates sometimes will help sell difficult ideas, but only if the subordinates are known to be working under identical conditions, a point which their fellow workers frequently will dispute. Visual proof, when necessary, always is more convincing than verbal endorsement.

Letting Subordinates Sell Themselves

When the instruction is such that the executive knows it will meet considerable resistance and

doubts his ability to sell it, he often can simplify the job considerably by maneuvering a subordinate into suggesting the same steps, to the executive alone or to a group.

This method has been used successfully many times, although it is by no means certain to work. It is most likely to work when the leader previously has suggested the idea, thus putting it in the subordinate's mind. A chain-grocery supervisor wanted to increase banana sales and had tried without success to get his managers interested. Finally at a meeting of managers, he called on one man in charge of a large store and asked his suggestions. The manager was flustered since he had given the matter no thought, but he wanted to suggest something to protect his prestige. Accordingly, he proposed that the bananas be weighed up and priced by the bunch, breaking some of the whole bunches into parts in order to offer a wider range of weights and prices.

The supervisor, who had proposed the same idea some months before with little success, questioned the plan. "Will that really help sales?" he asked.

Immediately there was a chorus of agreement. Four managers claimed they had tried the idea and that it worked quite well. The supervisor then agreed that it must be a good idea and suggested that everyone try it. The next day every manager had such a display.

The supervisor had accomplished exactly what he set out to do, by the use of two methods:

—Getting a subordinate to make the suggestion instead of having it come from the superior.

—Using the negative psychology of pretending doubt and thus challenging the managers to prove him wrong.

Most subordinates have good ideas and are eager to propose them. If they are given a chance to contribute ideas and if the ideas are accepted, they are almost certain to follow them out. The ideas then are their own; they are not instructions from the man they work for. When the superior knows that one of his men favors a plan he wants adopted, he can encourage the subordinate to introduce it at a meeting and thus increase the chances of its acceptance.

It is impossible, of course, to tell when an idea is really sold until there has been a chance to see whether it is put into effect. Subordinates often agree to an instruction which they later disregard. There are several reasons why this happens:

First, they may not think of their objections at the time. The instruction seems all right, but when they have had a chance to think it over they find it is not so desirable as it seemed when it was presented.

Second, many executives have a way of making it uncomfortable for subordinates who object too often or too stubbornly. Consequently the subordinates get into the habit of agreeing and then disregarding their agreement.

Third, subordinates may give an instruction a short trial, find that it doesn't work out just as they anticipated, and then disregard it.

Only time will tell if the subordinates have agreed without being actually convinced. The closer the executive has come to selling the advantages of the instruction from the subordinates' viewpoint, the more likely he is to overcome lack of interest or opposition. But follow-up is required to tell how good a job of selling has been done.

CHAPTER XV

SELLING DIFFICULT IDEAS

Instructions which require a change in habits or the adoption of a new habit are considered the most difficult of all to sell. In this category can be placed most plans or ideas which must be carried out over a long period of time, since subordinates must either form habits in connection with those ideas or keep them continuously in mind.

Habits cannot be changed or formed overnight. It definitely is known that habits are formed by repetition. They can be broken only by a conscious effort on the part of the individual or with the aid of someone in frequent contact with him. They can be formed only by a conscious desire to adopt them or by forced repetition. The stronger the desire, the easier it is for the individual to form the habit. The more frequent the repetition, whether voluntary or forced, the sooner the habit will be formed.

If, for example, a sales manager were to request a group of twenty salesmen to suggest a specific type of store display to every customer called on, and the salesmen were interested in the idea, but

not enthusiastic, it would be amazing if more than ten of the salesmen observed the request the first day. By the end of a week, the idea probably would be forgotten completely if the sales manager were to take no additional steps to get it followed out. One sales manager, indeed, obtained the admission that not one of eighteen salesmen had mentioned a similar idea more than once. Remembering to follow out such ideas requires habit formation, and they too often aren't considered urgent or necessary enough to result in a habit.

On the other hand, if the salesmen were instructed to mention a price reduction to every dealer contacted, there would be scarcely a miss. That sort of request makes so favorable an impression that the necessary habit is developed very quickly.

Individuals practically always need help in forming habits. The less they appreciate the instruction, the more help they need. And since the formation of habits is based on repetition, the help given must take the form of reminders and emphasis. The reminders help keep the individuals conscious of the idea; the emphasis helps make it seem important.

It occasionally happens, of course, that a new idea appeals so strongly and seems so desirable to an individual that he remains continuously conscious of it and reminds himself to form the habit, but even then he is certain to forget at least a few

times. Forgetting is almost inevitable when dropping old habits and replacing them with new ones because habits are subconscious acts or processes. We all open the door subconsciously when we wish to enter our home or our automobile. We do not have to stop and think, "I want to pass through this doorway, so I must turn the handle of the door." We perform the act subconsciously, from habit, as a result of having performed the same act so many times in the past. But when we get a new car with door handles which must be turned in the opposite direction, we invariably forget and turn the handle the old way the first few days, because we have developed the habit of turning the handle the other way. Not until we have been reminded a number of times, by being unable to get the door open, do we finally drop the old habit and form the new habit of turning the handle the new way.

In opening doors we get automatic reminders to change our habits because the doors won't open when the old habit is followed. But a salesman receives no automatic reminders to help him unless his superior or someone else makes a point of reminding him, or unless the instruction seems so desirable that it remains foremost in his mind. Accordingly, rather than leaving development of habits to chance, the best policy is to supply reminders and emphasis on all occasions. Then habits are

more certain to be developed and will be formed more quickly.

How to Remind

Reminders can be given in various ways. A packing-house sales manager who discovered that his salesmen were trying to sell fresh pork sausage to only a small fraction of their dealers decided to put a drive on that item. He was faced with the job of developing a habit—the habit of trying to sell the sausage to a considerably greater number of dealers—because he wished the effort to be continued throughout the winter months. Realizing that frequent reminders over a period of weeks would be necessary to establish the habit, he used the following devices after the original presentation of the idea:

—Talked about the idea briefly at each weekly sales meeting.
—Adopted a slogan and imprinted it on all stationery and other printed material going to the salesmen.
—Prepared special sales letters, built around cartoons, and mailed one every week.
—Had banners and charts hung in the salesroom.
—Sent letters to the salesmen's wives.
—Had articles printed in the company magazine.

—Accompanied as many salesmen as possible on their routes and talked about sausage.

The same devices have been used hundreds of times by other executives with varying success. Consistent use of these and similar reminders is certain to speed up habit development because it keeps the subordinate continuously conscious of the idea the superior desires to have adopted as a habit.

How to Emphasize

Slogans, and other unusual or impressive types of reminders, also will serve to emphasize the importance of a plan and thereby make it seem more desirable. Additional selling, at intervals, will serve the same purpose, as will reports of the accomplishments of individual salesmen and reports on overall results in dollars and cents, pounds sold, etc.

Perhaps the most effective means of providing emphasis, however, is to obtain endorsement of the plan from the head of the concern. The president of a corporation usually meets with rank-and-file subordinates only on special occasions. Making the current plan one of those occasions is sure to attach special importance to it and to emphasize the desirability of the plan.

Use of Films

Films now are used extensively by many business concerns to help sell difficult and important plans

to subordinates. Both moving pictures and slide films are used, with and without sound. It is rather generally agreed that moving pictures are too expensive when they are to be shown only to employees, but some concerns feel that results justify the cost of sound slide films.

The basic reason why films apparently are more successful than talks or written messages in getting plans accepted is said to be that we learn and are impressed much more quickly through the eye than through the ear; in addition, it is agreed that we learn more quickly from pictures than from type.

Men can understand pictures better than verbal or written descriptions. Pictures, if planned carefully, are more likely to tell a complete story or to convey the complete story to the audience. Printed words may be ambiguous whereas pictures tell a story in an individual's own words. Thus, pictures are more likely to tell a convincing story and are easier for subordinates to grasp.

Second, pictures add the factor of authenticity. When an idea or an action is shown in a picture, there is the implication that it really works, that it is genuine. To see a picture of a salesman using an idea or following an instruction implies that the idea is acceptable and thus may weaken the opposition of the audience.

In the third place, ideas presented by film are much more certain to be transmitted fully and

accurately by other executives and assistants, than ideas which are transmitted verbally. Other individuals may, and often do, omit important facts, may lack force and emphasis, and may give an idea quite inadequate attention. Films prevent all those possibilities and assure the plan a fair and full presentation.

In addition, film presentations can and usually do make the subject interesting, by story treatment, use of humor, and so on. When the over-all effect is interesting, the central idea also appears more interesting to those for whom it is intended, and they consequently gain a more favorable impression of the idea. Then, too, films attach importance to an idea. Subordinates are more likely to take an idea seriously when the organization has gone to the expense of preparing a film. Finally, a film is certain to be of some help in selling an idea for the simple reason that it provides repetition in effective form. When subordinates have heard an idea presented by the executive and have read about it in bulletins or sales letters, they may or may not have become interested. An additional appeal through films and pictures unquestionably increases the likelihood of the idea's being accepted, if the film is skillfully prepared.

The matter of expense must be settled according to the circumstances in each case. But it is safe to say that films will help sell difficult instructions,

campaigns, procedures, sales training programs, and similar ideas. They usually are so much more interesting than exhortations by executives to whom subordinates have listened many times that employees often welcome them enthusiastically.

The methods just described, which customarily are used to promote contests in sales organizations, are equally useful in accomplishing the more fundamentally important purpose of building habits through which the adoption of plans and instructions is made much more certain. No one of the devices listed can be expected to help much in developing habits unless subordinates are actively interested in the idea. But most or all of the steps together can be counted on to help greatly. And there can be no doubt of the fact that habits must be developed when new instructions or plans are to be kept in force indefinitely or for long periods.

Chapter XVI

SELLING INSTRUCTIONS TO GROUPS

Sales meetings, or their equivalents with other types of subordinates, offer several decided advantages in issuing instructions or introducing new plans.

The first advantage is that meetings save time; it takes little more time to explain and sell an idea to one hundred or one dozen than it does to cover the subject with one individual.

Second, when talking to a group it is possible to be much more enthusiastic and forceful than an executive ordinarily would be in appealing to one man alone. Arm waving and "oratory" seem out of place in two-man conversations; they are quite in order and serve a definitely valuable purpose in a group meeting.

In the third place, the executive can obtain the endorsement of subordinates for his instructions and thus simplify his selling job.

Perhaps the greatest single benefit of group meetings, however, lies in the opportunity to help subordinates think clearly about plans and policies. For it is necessary to recognize the regrettable fact

that subordinates as a general rule do not think out most problems thoroughly.

This should not be interpreted as a reflection on subordinates, because the statement applies to most individuals. People seldom reason out a problem or a proposal clearly. If they did, we would not see thirty million people voting one way and twenty million others voting another way in a national election.

Those differences of opinion result from the same causes that lead subordinates to unsound decisions in business:

1. The employees lack complete information.
2. They are susceptible to emotion and prejudice.

When a new plan or policy is announced, subordinates seldom are prepared to judge it fairly or adequately. They do not have the necessary background of facts, in many cases, on which to base a sound conclusion. Indeed, executives themselves frequently find it necessary to call on other individuals for advice and opinions and to spend several weeks or months weighing the merits of a proposed plan before they finally approve it. And even if subordinates could seek advice to the same extent, and take the same amount of time to consider a plan, they ordinarily would not, because they do

not have a sufficient appreciation of the need for careful thinking.

Instead, they usually think until they have a satisfactory mass of evidence on the side they are predisposed to favor, and then reach a decision on the basis of incomplete facts. Unfortunately, when instructions and policies are under consideration, this means that they usually are predisposed against the proposal, for reasons previously discussed. Thus, they tend to think negatively about instructions and to avoid the positive factors, even if they are familiar with them. And if an individual thinks for ten minutes against an idea, and only two minutes for the idea, he is quite likely to end up with an unfavorable conclusion.

To check this tendency and insure recognition and consideration of the favorable aspects of an instruction, it is important to do more than merely repeat the advantages it offers. The advantages should be emphasized and may have to be discussed in detail before subordinates will accept them. And there is no better means of drawing out objections and of emphasizing the advantages than holding a frank, open discussion of an important instruction or policy. In the course of the discussion, the superior can lead his subordinates through the thinking process and thus insure full and fair consideration of both sides of the question.

In addition to helping gain better acceptance of individual instructions, the practice of conducting discussions invariably will, in time, improve the thinking habits of many subordinates and thus prepare them to think more clearly and intelligently about instructions issued in the future.

These advantages are by no means certain to result, however. Sales meetings too often fall short of their purpose. As a rule, unless the meetings are held at long intervals, salesmen and other employees dread them. And when such an attitude accompanies meetings, their advantages are certain to be completely nullified.

The dislike for sales meetings is based largely on one objection: from the viewpoint of employees, meetings tend to be uninteresting, dull, prolonged, unhelpful. And the principal reason why that impression exists is because executives spend too little time figuring out ways to make the meetings interesting as well as instructive.

Sometimes it is the individual speaker or speakers who are responsible for dull meetings. When that is the case, a change of faces or more careful selection of talent will solve the problem. More often, however, it is necessary to look elsewhere for the real reason. And usually it will be found that disregard of one or more of these well-tested rules is the true cause:

Keep Meetings Short

Meetings should seldom last more than two hours, and the closer they stick to one hour, the more successful they will be. Business can take a tip from the stage and the movie house which seldom try to hold audiences more than two hours, even though they are entertaining people, rather than educating or instructing them.

Men who are accustomed to being active become exceedingly restless after the first hour and their attention and interest fall off sharply. Two short meetings a month or even two a week are preferable to one long meeting, even though extra expense is incurred.

When holding conventions which last two or three days, regular breaks in the program are imperative. Otherwise, the interest of the group will lag and the benefits of the meetings will be reduced considerably.

Vary Every Meeting

The best speaker and the best program soon become monotonous. Variations should be introduced at every meeting if possible. A mere change of subject is not sufficient, because if the same men do the talking, there is bound to be a repetition of phrase and viewpoint which soon becomes dull. Nothing is more deadly than to be faced with the

certainty that the meeting will be opened by the General Sales Manager and that he will be followed in order by the Head of the Service Department, the Assistant Sales Manager, the City Sales Manager, and the Vice-president in Charge of Production.

There always will be a certain amount of speaking at every sales meeting, but to prevent monotony the order of speakers should be shuffled, new faces should be presented from time to time, and the talking should be interspersed with charts, blackboard presentations, slides or moving pictures, and possibly a few demonstrations.

See That the Speakers Plan Their Talks

Good extemporaneous speakers are about as scarce as good salesmen. For that reason, the executive in charge of a meeting should see that all speakers have given some thought to the content and organization of their remarks. In the case of subordinates, that is easily done by calling them in and indicating what they are to say or by asking them what they intend to cover. If necessary, they can be coached to do the job effectively.

With superiors or equals, it pays to take advantage of the fact that most men are somewhat lazy and give them an outline of the subject for which they are responsible. They usually will adopt it

rather than go to the trouble of working out one for themselves.

A well-planned talk will require only half as much time as a talk that inspires itself as it goes along. The new radio industry soon found it necessary to obtain a manuscript in advance from every speaker, knowing that that was the only way for any man to be sure to say what he had to say in a given time.

Give the Group a Part in the Meeting

One way to insure the success of a meeting is to call on a few of the subordinates to talk on specified subjects or to relate experiences which have a bearing on the general subject.

Another way is to conduct the meeting along conference or discussion lines, in which the leader acts as a chairman and guides the group to a sound decision on proposed instructions. However, this plan requires a special technique and should be used only after the methods have been thoroughly mastered. And it is necessary only when the subjects to be discussed are particularly controversial or when advice is sought.

Since this method also requires a good deal of time, it is best used when a decision actually is wanted from the group or when there is a good chance of the group's suggesting and agreeing on the decision which is desired.

A quick-thinking leader who is able and willing to sell his ideas in open forum can use this procedure effectively, provided he is careful to observe these points:

—Plan the meeting carefully in advance, outlining minor questions which will build up favorable opinion for the main issue.
—Maintain an impartial attitude throughout. Do not express or infer an opinion until the group has reached an agreement.
—Encourage free discussion by maintaining a strictly noncritical attitude, by praising good suggestions, by not criticizing poor ideas.
—Call on men who are likely to advance sound solutions, but draw everyone into the meeting frequently. Letting a few men dominate the conversation will kill interest for the others and give the impression that a few men are making the decisions.
—Encourage argument and disagreement. That is the only way that all the objections can be drawn out and disposed of. Criticizing a man for objecting or disagreeing will kill a discussion quickly.
—Dispose of undesirable or unworkable ideas by asking those who suggest them to explain their ideas in detail. Throw wrong opinions back to the group for discussion. Be pre-

pared to ask pointed questions which will expose the weakness of faulty opinions or suggestions.

—Settle prolonged arguments with a vote if you feel that the majority will vote for the right solution. Then suggest that everyone try the recommendation of the majority.

—Dispose tactfully of statements or questions which are beside the point by offering to discuss such matters later or in private.

—Be sure not to embarrass any individuals by asking them questions which they probably can't answer or by waiting too long for answers. If an individual takes too long to answer, call on someone else.

—Above all, make the subordinates feel that *they* reached the decisions. There always is a temptation for the executive to take a stand, merely to save time, but there is no surer way of spoiling a discussion.

Make Everyone Comfortable

Many meetings fail in their purpose solely because the audience is uncomfortable. Comfortable chairs, well-spaced with room to stretch and relax; plenty of ventilation; ample but soft lighting; and satisfactory temperature have a great deal to do with the length of time a group will remain interested. Good acoustics also are essential.

Select a Suitable Time

Evening meetings, when the group is tired and probably anxious to be doing something else, demand a genuinely good program. Meetings held right after lunch also must be lively, because there is a tendency for the audience to become sleepy. The best time for meetings is first thing in the morning, which usually is the portion of the day when salesmen can best spare the time.

There is a good deal more involved in the successful use of meetings, but these are the principal points to observe. Once mastered, the discussion method of selling ideas is highly effective, because the group, rather than the leader, proposes the final solution, objections are aired and disposed of, thinking is stimulated, and the leader has the aid of clear-thinking men in the group to back up the plans he wishes to sell.

The fact that subordinates can be expected to attend meetings at the whim of their superiors should not be permitted to interfere with careful planning for the purpose of creating and holding interest. A sales manager with an important program or idea to put over will do well to plan his meeting as carefully as he would plan for a presentation to the Board of Directors. Either audience is just as hard to sell.

Skillful presentation of instructions along the lines just discussed will aid greatly in getting instructions observed, but the executive cannot afford to assume that doing a good job of selling and explaining is sufficient. Further steps usually are necessary to insure acceptance of an instruction.

CHAPTER XVII

FOLLOWING UP EFFECTIVELY

Even when determined effort has been made to explain and sell an instruction, and subordinates apparently understand and accept it, two things may happen:

—The instruction may be partly or wholly disregarded in spite of the agreement which has been obtained.
—The instruction may be carried out improperly by the subordinates.

To guard against either possibility, follow-up is definitely needed. Without it, there is no reason to assume that any plan or instruction is being observed properly.

Indeed, follow-up is highly essential even if the instruction is of minor importance, for the simple reason that, as already brought out, no executive can afford to let his instructions be disregarded. Insistence on observance of instructions has already been singled out as a primary factor in building up and maintaining respect. Its significance can hardly be stressed too much.

While it is true that no one idea can have much effect on profits in the long run, it is true beyond question that the more instructions an executive permits to be disregarded, the more trouble he will have with future instructions. Once subordinates learn that they can disregard plans or ideas without getting into trouble, they are quite likely to pay less attention to the instructions they receive in the future.

Conversely, the more carefully the leader follows up, the less trouble he will have with future instructions. Indeed, the amount of follow-up required becomes less and less when the executive follows up closely on each instruction for some months. As soon as subordinates learn they are certain to be followed up, they invariably begin to observe instructions more faithfully.

As a result, when he has gained a reputation for follow-up, a superior not only can get satisfactory results with limited follow-up on future instructions but, in emergencies, can fail to follow up at all on an occasional instruction and still be fairly certain it will be observed.

Close, consistent follow-up builds good habits in subordinates and is sure to improve their performances. That is why many successful executives consider a reputation for follow-up one of the best assets a leader can have. And good follow-up involves three important steps:

—Checking performance closely.
—Handling difficult instructions skillfully.
—Criticizing subordinates effectively.

How to Check Performance

Checking on instructions is a simple procedure. In general, there are only three ways to do it:

1. Look over records or reports which will give the necessary information.
2. Go out and watch the man do the job in actual practice.
3. Install, temporarily, new reports which will provide helpful information.

No one of these methods is sufficient, however, if used alone. The mere fact that a salesman reports making nine calls a day does not mean that he made nine actual calls, nor does it prove that the calls were effective, profitable ones.

A report from a salesman that he followed out a display idea does not constitute sufficient evidence that he made the proper sort of displays.

On the other hand, traveling with a salesman and watching him use effective selling methods with his customers does not prove that he works the same way when he is alone. And the fact that he uses poor methods of selling when under observation does not mean that he always uses ineffective methods. He may have been self-conscious.

Reports which show the results of a subordinate's work likewise are unreliable, for they reflect results but not methods. The fact that a subordinate has obtained satisfactory results does not prove that he obtained the results by the methods he was instructed to use.

In unusual cases, as when looking for fundamental weaknesses in a sales force, it sometimes is desirable to follow up by "shopping" a group of salesmen; that is, having some outsider pose as buyer to observe the methods used and the extent to which specific procedures are carried out. But this is a decidedly dangerous plan to use too often or too regularly. There is no quicker means of demoralizing a sales force, or any other group of men, than by giving the impression that they are being spied on.

A combination of careful analysis of records and reports, together with frequent observation of the way subordinates work on the job, usually is sufficient, but special reports often are desirable and necessary for effective follow-up.

Value of Special Reports

New reports always are looked on with disfavor by superiors and subordinates alike, and rightly so, because they add to the detail work of a job. But a report which aids definitely in follow-up and actually helps get a new plan or policy carried

out certainly is desirable and profitable, provided it is discontinued when its purpose has been accomplished.

A new report is most necessary in connection with instructions which cannot be checked up in any other way. For example, reports are almost essential to induce chain grocery or drug managers to "push" specific items, unless the managers themselves select the items to be pushed. In the absence of any report, the manager knows that no one can check his performance. When a report is installed, however, he not only knows he can be checked, and probably will be, but knows he can be compared with other men. As a result, the report provides the urge to do the job.

Such reports, of course, must be reviewed and talked about to have real value. If the subordinates hear nothing from the reports during the first few weeks, they are quite likely to let down thereafter.

Frequency of Follow-up

Many executives who have the best intentions regarding follow-up accomplish little because they disregard one fundamental principle: they permit too long intervals to elapse between their efforts to check up. Experience and common sense both point to the conclusion that follow-up should commence soon after the instruction is issued and should be repeated at close intervals. It is far more

effective to follow up twice a month for three months in a row than to follow up once a month for six months. Each important new instruction or policy usually requires a change of habit or the adoption of a new habit by the subordinate. Frequent reminders usually are required to effect the change. The closer together the reminders come, and the sooner they start, the easier it is to mold habits. Thus, the review of records and reports and the observation of a subordinate's work cannot be spasmodic. Frequent, consistent follow-up will get much more thorough and much quicker results.

Follow-up takes time—valuable time—on the part of the executive. Yet a short test of whether it is needed will show very quickly, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, that the time is well spent. Every leader who has neglected to follow up closely will do well to test the results obtained on the next ten instructions he issues. His findings will answer the question of whether he needs to follow up. It can safely be said that there are not more than a handful of sales managers or other executives in the country who are so skillful and persuasive in issuing and selling instructions that they get results without close and, temporarily, continuous follow-up.

In short, follow-up is good insurance against ineffective instructions and is as necessary a step as explaining and selling instructions, for every type of executive who deals with men.

CHAPTER XVIII

GETTING DIFFICULT INSTRUCTIONS ADOPTED

When follow-up shows that an instruction has been disregarded, the executive who issued it is faced with a twofold loss:

1. Loss of whatever benefits the instruction was intended to produce.
2. Loss of the respect of his subordinates, to some extent, at least.

The first loss is certain unless further steps are taken to get the instruction carried out. It is by no means so certain that there will be a direct or apparent loss of respect, even if the executive does nothing more about the situation, but the risk is sufficiently great to make that policy undesirable. Even though he may decide the instruction is not important enough to justify further effort, the executive at least should take steps to protect himself against loss of respect by following this procedure, recommended by the president of a utility concern:

First, mention to the subordinates that the instruction has been disregarded. This will notify

them that the instruction was followed up and will insure the executive that much credit. *Second*, ask why the instruction was not carried out. Even though the answer given by the subordinates is not the true one, the executive can accept it, agree or disagree that circumstances justified the failure to observe the instruction, and announce that the instruction will be canceled or postponed, as seems best. *Third*, then issue a new instruction of some kind to demonstrate that the disregard of the other instruction has not weakened the executive's confidence in his ability to get instructions carried out.

Merely dropping the matter when an instruction has been ignored is too likely to prompt subordinates to think, "We got away with that one and nothing happened. He didn't even reprimand us. It looks like he is afraid to have a show-down. Maybe we can forget about some more instructions."

As mentioned, it is not likely that one such experience will produce that reaction, but each time an executive permits an instruction to be ignored, he comes nearer to the day when respect will be seriously impaired.

In most instances, however, instructions are sufficiently important to justify the extra effort needed to gain acceptance for them. The course to

follow in that effort will vary according to circumstances, but usually will involve these general steps, the number of steps required depending on how much resistance the executive encounters:

1. Determining why the instruction was disregarded.
2. Reexplaining or reselling it, as necessary.
3. Using the appeal of pride.
4. Having a show-down.

Determining the Trouble

Briefly, as has been stated, the reasons why an instruction may be disregarded are as follows:

—The instruction may have been misunderstood.

—The subordinate may not have known how to carry it out.

—He may have not wanted to carry it out (being either unwilling or not sufficiently interested).

Since the reason why the instruction was ignored governs the course to follow, the first step is to determine the reason—by questioning the subordinate, or by using the process of elimination.

Disposing of Alibis

Asking a subordinate why he disregarded an instruction quite often brings forth alibis, an alibi

being an untrue or misleading explanation. But this need by no means be a stumbling block to the executive, because the alibis often put him in position to pin down the subordinate. Although the temptation is strong to expose alibis and prove that the subordinate has misrepresented the facts, most experienced executives refrain from doing so unless the subordinate is so frequently an offender that they consider it desirable to break him of the habit.

An executive can afford to accept an occasional alibi from any employee without challenge. For subordinates are inclined to believe their alibis and to resent any implication that they are not true. A salesman may say, "I didn't have time," and firmly believe that was the reason for disregarding an instruction, whereas the real reason was that he put off the job because he didn't want to take the time. Contradicting him or proving him wrong implies that he lied, and relations never are entirely satisfactory between two men when one has accused the other of lying. It is better, in general, to accept an alibi and then proceed accordingly.

Some of the most common alibis, besides, "I didn't have time," are:

—"I didn't understand that."
—"I was going to do that today."
—"I forgot all about it."

—"I thought I had done that."
—"I didn't get that letter."
—"I didn't know there was any hurry."
—"I just didn't get to it."

Alibis may be used to hide strong objections the subordinate hesitates to mention, or to conceal laziness, forgetfulness, or various other causes.

Each of the alibis mentioned offers an opportunity to get a definite agreement from subordinates. If an employee says, "I forgot," the executive can say, in effect, "You now have been reminded. When will you get it done?" If the alibi is, "I didn't understand that" or "I didn't get that letter," the reply can be, "You know about it now. When will you have the job completed?" or "When will you start?" And so on.

When he uses an alibi to conceal real objections, the subordinate lays himself open to having to agree to follow the instruction when the conditions cited in his alibi are removed. If he excuses his failure on the grounds that he didn't understand, he then obliges himself to observe the instruction as soon as the executive clears up the misunderstanding. For if he still should fail to observe the instruction, he would be admitting that his first reason was untrue.

However, if the executive senses that the alibi is being used to conceal objections, he may wish to

go beyond the alibi in order to bring out the objections. Whether he does so will depend on how willing he is to answer the objections. As a general rule, objections should be brought into the open and answered, but it is not always practical to do so.

If the instruction involves a job to be completed quickly, the subordinate's agreement may be sufficient. But if the instruction covers a job or policy which is to remain in effect and be observed for some time to come, it is desirable to recognize the objections and answer them effectively. Otherwise, the subordinate is likely to fall back on his objections before very long and again disregard the instruction.

Questioning the Subordinate

A conversation with a subordinate who has ignored an instruction can be opened smoothly and pointedly by repeating the instruction. That helps to settle quickly the question of whether the subordinate understood what was expected of him.

The branch sales manager of a truck manufacturing concern illustrated that method effectively in this manner: "Perkins, I asked you men four weeks ago to report on the number of competitive trucks over six years old being operated by each of your accounts. I haven't had a single list from you yet. What held you up?"

The salesman's answer was: "I haven't started on that because I've been busy on the ______ deal. Besides, you already have that information in your files from the registration figures."

That reply told the sales manager what he wanted to know—the salesman didn't want to observe the instruction; he considered it unnecessary. It then was plain that the next step was to sell the salesman on the idea.

However, if the salesman had said, "I've had trouble getting the customers to give me the information," the sales manager would have had to determine, through further questioning, whether that was the real reason or an alibi.

The latter answer would indicate that the salesman doesn't know how to get the information. If he believes the answer is the true one, the sales manager could then proceed by one of two methods: first, by telling the salesman how to get the information easily; second, by asking him how he went about it and then judging from his answer whether he knew how.

If a subordinate has fallen down on an instruction because he didn't know how to carry it out, telling him how will eliminate the trouble. In the same way, if he didn't understand the instruction or any part of it, clearing up the misunderstanding ends the difficulty.

Since a subordinate may offer either reason as an alibi to conceal objections or lack of interest in the instruction, and since the executive frequently cannot be sure whether the reason given is the real one, he must be guided by the importance and urgency of the instruction in deciding whether to go on and question the subordinate further. If the reason is genuine, the matter will have been disposed of when the superior has supplied the additional information. The executive must use his best judgment in deciding whether to do some selling at this point or whether to wait and do it later, if necessary.

Reselling Instructions

When the subordinate admits that he objects to the instruction, or when the executive assumes that he does, the next step is to answer and remove the objections. The procedure is the same as was recommended for selling the idea initially, except that attention should be centered on the specific objections which exist or which the executive suspects to exist.

It must be borne in mind, however, that the objections the subordinate mentions may not be the real ones. Thus, he may state that the instruction will take too much time, whereas he really feels that it is not sufficiently important to spend time on. He may say that the instruction will an-

tagonize customers, when he actually objects because he lacks confidence in his ability to follow the instruction successfully.

The executive should make every effort to recognize the evasive reasons and bring out or shrewdly guess the real, underlying reasons before he does his selling. Otherwise he will be aiming in the wrong direction and will get nowhere.

The amount of selling required at this step is difficult to determine. On urgent, timely instructions, an executive will do well to make certain that the instructions will be carried out. Otherwise, he is justified in taking a chance on a limited amount of selling and then having to talk again with the subordinate at a later date. Past experience with the individual subordinate is perhaps the best guide.

Getting Results Indirectly

At this point, it should be recognized that results may be obtained after the first conversation, even though the subordinate is not sold on the instruction. He may, and probably will, decide to carry it out simply to avoid trouble and risk of jeopardizing his standing. And while this is not an ideal outcome from the executive's viewpoint, it is satisfactory for practical purposes.

Executives cannot hope to sell each instruction to every subordinate. Indeed, it should not be

considered necessary to do so. The important consideration is that instructions be put into effect with a minimum of opposition on the part of subordinates. They are being paid to further the best interests of their employers. If an instruction can be put into effect without disturbing their attitudes and their interest in the work, no harm has been done.

It is important, of course, that a majority of instructions—as many as possible—be really sold, but there must be and will be exceptions, for two reasons:

First, because executives unwittingly will force some instructions through, thinking they have sold them.

Second, because close follow-up, even without pressure, will induce most employees to observe instructions they object to only mildly. They will risk their jobs, for the most part, only when the instructions are particularly objectionable, or when they, for some reason, have completely lost interest in their jobs and are ready to throw them over. Otherwise, they will take chances on ignoring an instruction until they have been followed up and called to account, and then will fall in line regardless of their objections.

Handling Difficult Individuals

There are, however, two types of individuals who occasionally must be dealt with at greater length:

—The individualistic, capable man whose performance might be damaged by insisting that he observe instructions he considers unnecessary or objectionable.
—The stubborn, radical man who resents instructions as a general policy.

The first type should be handled tactfully, more tactfully than the second, because he is a more valuable man. In either case, however, an appeal to pride can be the next step, although the executive may wish to skip it in the case of the stubborn individual, with the justification that he isn't worth the effort. Past experience once more is the best guide.

Appealing to Pride

Practically every executive has at least one difficult subordinate whose ability and results he values highly. He may be a star salesman or an unusually competent store manager or a thoroughly capable assistant.

No one would recommend upsetting such men and reducing their efficiency over a minor instruc-

tion. That would be poor business. Many a man has been ruined in that way by a stubborn, short-sighted superior.

On the other hand, an executive cannot afford to back down ungracefully before these individuals, for fear they may become too independent and lose their respect for him, and because other subordinates immediately would suspect favoritism.

An appeal to pride has been used most successfully on these individuals by many executives. Pride is present in every human, although it sometimes is hard to reach. It will sway men—even the stubborn, radical type—if the appeal is skillful.

It is universally acknowledged that a desire for prestige is present in everyone to some degree. Pride is a feeling of esteem for one's standing or accomplishment or rank. While an individual may not feel superior or may not feel he has acquired any particular prestige, he nevertheless wants it. And if he feels he has achieved it, he wants to keep it.

Appealing to a man's pride, then, means coupling the instruction with his self-esteem, his prestige, his standing. The appeal must imply that observance of the instruction is necessary to his continued prestige or will enhance it.

The applications of the appeal to pride are too varied to enumerate, but the following examples will clarify the process:

—Show how following the instruction will make the individual even more successful and even more outstanding.
—Imply that disregard of the instruction will hurt his results and his standing with his fellow workers.
—Show him how the instruction fits in with some objective he is particularly anxious to attain—getting a new home or a new car, getting married, leading the sales force.
—Picture observance of the instruction as an act of good sportsmanship which will cause fellow employees to look up to him.

Various other applications of the pride appeal will be apparent in connection with specific instructions. There is an appeal that will work with every individual if it can be found. And success as an executive depends quite largely on ability to find the right appeals, with the aid of persistence and ingenuity.

If the appeal to pride is successful with the capable individualist, the job is done. If it is not successful, the superior must make his choice between running the risk of antagonizing the man and thereby reducing his efficiency, or gracefully giving up.

In giving up, however, it is not necessary to do so openly. A parting remark such as, "You think

it over," or "I'll leave it up to you, but I think you're wrong," or "Let's talk about it again next time you are in," disposes of the matter for the time being, or permanently if the superior chooses.

Where the instruction applies to one subordinate only, giving up occasionally will do no harm and may increase the subordinate's respect for the executive. But if he is one of a group to whom the same instruction applies, the superior who gives up must face the fact that he has failed at some point and will have to resign himself to the possible unfortunate reaction of the rest of the group.

Having a Showdown

With the radical stubborn type and occasionally, perhaps, with the capable subordinate, a showdown is the next and final step before considering dismissal.

A showdown, as practiced by many executives, consists of having an understanding to the effect that instructions must be followed. An outstanding example of this step was overheard in an interview between a chain-store superintendent and one of his store managers. The superintendent made his point about as follows:

"I have asked you six times, Walters, to open this store on time. I've told you each time why I insist on that and you've had plenty of chance to

tell your side of the story. But you were forty minutes late again this morning.

"I don't care why. We are past the time for explanations and alibis. You are paid $50 a week for doing this job. We want the benefit of your ideas and ingenuity. But we also insist that you observe policies and instructions. That's part of what you're paid for.

"When I issue an instruction, you have the privilege, as you well know, of objecting and arguing. But if you don't win the argument, the instruction is to be carried out. Is that fair? Is there anything unreasonable about that?"

"No, but . . . "

"Never mind the rest of it. Is that arrangement fair?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Will you work that way from now on?"

"I will, but I . . . "

"Will you or not?"

"I will."

"Starting when?"

"Tomorrow."

"And every day afterward?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm not talking just about getting the store open. What I have said covers all instructions. You understand that?"

"I do."

"All right. We'll get along splendidly on that basis. Remember, now, you can argue your head off. You'll win now and then, as you know. But when you lose your case, the instruction stands and you observe it to the letter. Okay?"

"I'll do it."

"Fine, and now . . . "

This firm, businesslike approach could not fail to do the job. Had it been sarcastic or mean, the manager might have quit. But the superintendent gave no such provocation. His method consisted of:

1. Stating the case convincingly.
2. Ruling out further argument.
3. Confirming his patience and fairness.
4. Getting agreement that his stand was reasonable.
5. Stating his policy on instructions.
6. Getting unqualified agreement.
7. Extending the agreement to cover all instructions.
8. Getting a definite promise.

It will be noticed that the man's job was not threatened. Discharge was not mentioned or hinted at. The threat to discharge is the next move unless forestalled by the discharge itself.

This same effective procedure can be used by any executive when occasion arises. Experience

proves that the show-down will work when used skillfully, although the most successful leaders seldom have to use it; they get results before reaching this step.

Varying the Procedure

Although the plan for dealing with difficult instructions and individuals has been presented as a step-by-step procedure, it may be varied greatly in practical use, depending on circumstances. The executive may feel there is no need of reselling an instruction, because of its simplicity. If so, his first move may be the appeal to pride. Or if the subordinate is an old offender, the showdown may be the first step.

The object, however, is to get instructions carried out and leave the best feeling possible, or practical, with the subordinate. For that reason, the plan deserves to be followed much more often than not.

Aggressive, tactful action along these lines in only a few instances will give the executive's instructions a new force which will greatly reduce the tendency of his men to disregard them. The job of dealing with those that are disregarded then will be relatively easy.

CHAPTER XIX

CRITICIZING SUBORDINATES EFFECTIVELY

The attitude a superior should take toward subordinates who have ignored an instruction depends on the nature of the idea, the real reason why it was disregarded, and the urgency of the instruction. The superior can merely remind subordinates about the importance of the plan or idea, he can criticize or reprimand them, or he can make an effort to sell the instruction more effectively.

The last solution unquestionably is the most desirable if there is reason to believe the subordinates object to the instruction and if immediate action is not required. However, if the instruction is urgent and must be put into effect immediately, and there is no time for selling, the executive must resort to some form of criticism, or to tactics which subordinates will interpret as criticism, no matter how skillfully he handles it.

If an instruction has been disregarded simply because the subordinate did not consider it important and thus put it off or forgot about it, and if the instruction is not particularly urgent, a

reminder should be sufficient. But if the request is important and urgent, more forceful steps must be taken to insure prompt action. Calling a subordinate's attention to the fact that he has failed to observe an instruction and pointing out that the instruction must be put into effect is regarded as criticism by subordinates and therefore will be so considered in this discussion.

Inasmuch as the interview with the subordinate usually must and does go beyond calling attention to the situation and requesting action, the executive should control his criticism carefully to avoid harmful effects, for criticism is a dangerous tool. As one automobile executive points out, the purpose of criticism is to get instructions carried out, not to make the employee feel badly or to make him worried. The nature of the criticism should be fitted to the make-up of the individual and to the circumstances. A man who habitually disregards instructions may need rather vigorous criticism; an infrequent offender only a mild variety, possibly little more than a reminder. The sensitive man must be criticized most carefully, while the more hardened individual needs more direct methods.

Moreover, as every executive will realize, the exceptionally capable subordinate must be dealt with carefully, because unskillful criticism may impair his total usefulness, all because of a minor incident. To play safe when criticizing any sub-

ordinate, experience indicates the value of observing these rules:

Control Your Temper

It is, unfortunately, perfectly natural for an executive to become irritated and angry when a subordinate ignores an instruction. But it is essential that such feelings be completely concealed when talking with the employee. An executive who has a strong tendency toward losing his temper can prevent regrettable consequences by the well-known device of waiting until he has cooled off before holding the interview or by developing better self-control.

An outbreak of temper on the part of the executive is certain to reduce or nullify the effect of his effort because it invariably stirs up resentment in the mind of the subordinate. The very violence of the superior gives the subordinate reason to feel that he is being treated unfairly. He then loses sight of the fact that he was at fault and centers his thoughts only on his conviction that he is not getting a square deal.

Or if resentment is not aroused, the subordinate is likely to take the executive's attitude too seriously and begin to worry about his job. Worry is certain to reduce the effectiveness of his work, so that the executive loses, no matter which of the two reactions takes place.

Let the Man Talk

A subordinate who has disregarded an instruction usually has some explanation to offer. Some of the reasons are valid, most are not, but unless he gets a chance to have his say, the subordinate will feel that his rights are being violated.

The right to present one's side of the case, as provided in the criminal courts, is a right that every subordinate demands and is entitled to. Any sort of defense, weak as it may be, weak as he may know it to be, makes him feel better. When a man becomes resentful because he feels he has not had a "fair hearing," his resentment is likely to obscure the whole issue in his mind. He feels the superior has been unfair and the unfairness becomes much more important than his failure to observe the instruction.

Prove the Case

Criticism also is likely to fail in its purpose and to create resentment unless the executive justifies the criticism by definitely establishing the fact that the instruction has been ignored. It is a peculiar but common trait of practically all men that, when they are accused of wrongdoing of which they actually are guilty, they will take offense if they believe the other man is not sure of their guilt.

In the mind of the subordinate, the executive who makes the charge without proof is implying

that he considers the subordinate generally undependable. Otherwise, the subordinate reasons, the executive would have given him the benefit of the doubt. It is one thing to have been guilty of a specific mistake or an omission; it is another thing to be considered generally unreliable. That hurts a man's pride. Such an impression, when given by a superior, is certain to build up resentment. The subordinate thrusts aside the fact that he actually is guilty and broods over the implication that the executive had so little faith in him. This is a defense reaction, but it is one which must be recognized and guarded against.

There are two ways by which the executive can prove his case and establish conclusively that the instruction has been ignored. He can cite his own observation or that of other individuals, if such evidence is available, or he can prove the point by getting the subordinate to admit that he has disregarded the instruction. And the latter method is always preferable because it is more conclusive.

The admission can be obtained either by a direct question or by some such remark as, "I gather you haven't done anything with that plan yet. Is that the case?" If the instruction called for extra effort to increase sales of some particular item, and sales results show no improvement, there is reason to believe the instruction has been ignored, although

that may not be the case. Rather than assume no effort has been made, it is considerably more desirable to ask: "Your sales of used cars have shown no increase whatsoever since I issued the instruction to spend extra effort on them. It looks like you haven't gotten under way yet. What's the trouble?"

Some subordinates, of course, will misrepresent the facts and claim they have heeded the instruction when they actually have paid no attention to it, but that is a chance a superior must take. And even when the subordinate does lie, he will become impressed with the need for effecting the instruction and is quite likely to carry it out in order to ease his conscience.

Avoid Nagging

Nagging means talking too long about one fault or one mistake or bringing the subject up too often. Many individuals fall into the habit of nagging, partly to be sure of making their point and partly to establish superiority over the other individual. Since nagging irritates subordinates and again is likely to appear unfair, it is a practice that executives will do well to avoid. It is far better to state the complaint once, clearly and forcefully, and then forget about the matter until the subordinate has had ample time to carry out the instruction after the interview.

Guard against Excessive Criticism

Criticizing a number of shortcomings at one time is likely to have the same effect as nagging. No matter how many instructions a subordinate may have disregarded, the total amount of criticism should be regulated carefully. There is no harm, in the opinion of many executives, in calling attention to numerous shortcomings at one time, but it is neither desirable nor necessary to criticize each one at length and in detail. The value of criticism depends upon its helpful effect on the subordinate. Thus, adequate discussion of the most important shortcomings and brief mention of the others ordinarily are sufficient. If not, the other points can be criticized on another occasion. The chances are, however, that effective criticism of one shortcoming will straighten out the subordinate generally with respect to instructions and obviate further criticism, at least for the time being.

Use the Benefits of Praise

Praise, as previously mentioned, is an effective counteraction for criticism. Criticism is too likely to leave a sting, to hurt the subordinate's ego, and to make him discouraged, if not fearful and worried. Praise counteracts these tendencies and helps make the subordinate feel that the leader is being fair and that his criticism is justified.

If there is no occasion for praise, or if the executive fears that the subordinate will react unfavorably, a note of confidence is a good substitute. "I know you realize the importance of getting that job done, Joe, and I feel sure you will do as good a job as anyone else," is one good way to end an interview involving criticism.

Give Criticism Privately

Public criticism is a favorite practice of executives who drive. They have found that criticism of an individual in public causes humiliation and that subordinates dread the experience. Consequently, they figure that they can get better results with instructions if they rebuke their subordinates in front of others, because subordinates will observe instructions rather than undergo the experience.

The other side of the story, however, is that public criticism also produces strong resentment which works against the superior in various ways. The practice may, and usually does, get immediate results, but the unfavorable attitude built up in the subordinate invariably hurts future results. Even those executives who occasionally do criticize their employees in front of others agree, for the most part, that the practice is wrong. They follow it either without thinking or because they lose control of their tempers.

"Praise publicly—criticize in private" is a rule to which all successful leaders subscribe and one which subordinates invariably recommend when the subject is discussed with them.

The impression of criticism is almost inevitable when a superior charges a subordinate with having ignored an instruction, and that is good reason why it unquestionably pays to appear as fair and reasonable as possible. Subordinates tend to look for and find the worst. Criticism which produces worry fails in its purpose, unless worry is the superior's last resort in getting results from the particular individual. To repeat, the one and only purpose of criticism is to get better performance, currently and in the future. That requires leaving subordinates with the best attitude possible.

Chapter XX

GETTING HELP WITH INSTRUCTIONS

It has been assumed up to this point that the burden of getting instructions observed rests with the executive, and unquestionably that is where the responsibility does and should lie. But it may be desirable or necessary to delegate a part of the actual work to someone else—either to an assistant in the line organization or to a staff specialist.

Important as it is to see that instructions are carried out effectively, all executives have other responsibilities which require their time and attention. Accordingly, delegation of the responsibility for following through on instructions usually is definitely desirable when a complicated program of training is to be conducted for subordinates, and may be warranted under other circumstances if the executive's organization is large enough to justify the expense.

Conducting Extensive Programs

Regular training programs, or their equivalent under some other name, are needed in every business organization, even in those concerns which

provide careful, thorough training for new employees. In the first place, organizations frequently introduce new systems or plans which can be genuinely successful only if they are presented to subordinates slowly and systematically over a period of time. New lines or types of merchandise may be added, requiring detailed explanation and demonstration. Important new ideas are developed frequently in every sales organization and cannot be put into effect just by holding one or two brief meetings.

Moreover, a survey of the working methods of any group of subordinates, especially in the field of selling, is certain to disclose fundamental weaknesses which should be corrected and will require an extensive program of schooling. Such a survey is likely to show that basic principles are being disregarded or that important instructions issued in the past are being neglected or improperly applied. The continuous flow of new ideas in most organizations is certain to take attention away from earlier ideas and may cause subordinates to lose sight of the most valuable fundamentals of their jobs. Correcting these situations then becomes a matter of prime importance.

No matter how well equipped he may be to plan and conduct an extensive training program, the typical executive is not likely to do justice to the project. There is too much chance that he will be

interrupted by the press of other details and emergencies or that he will succumb to the temptation to spend his time on ideas which promise more immediate returns.

Unscheduled conferences with other executives, sudden business trips, and countless other emergencies arise to interfere with an executive's good intentions. Competition may suddenly come to life and start taking customers away or may introduce a new line of merchandise which slows up the organization's sales. There may be new employees to break in or important customers to entertain. Profits may begin to fall off, prompting the executive to give all his spare time to trouble shooting.

The scores of occurrences like these, which come up in the course of business, make it difficult for an executive to find time for a training program. Thus, the program is put off and then put off again, or else is started and then postponed a few times until it finally is dropped entirely. The details and emergencies too often are imperative and require immediate attention, or seem to, whereas the training program seldom is regarded as an immediate need. The very fact that it cannot be completed quickly forces it into the background when emergencies arise.

The temptation to work on plans which will bring a small profit immediately, rather than working on long-pull plans which promise a substantial

and permanent increase in profits after a few months, is an ever-present obstacle to the successful completion of training programs by executives. Especially when sales become unsatisfactory, there always is the tendency to concentrate attention on ways to increase sales this week or this month, rather than working on plans which will show little or no improvement for some months to come.

Sales executives who have the best of intentions with respect to their training programs may suddenly become interested in a new idea for displaying their merchandise in dealers' windows for the Fourth of July or some other special occasion. Or they discover new sales appeals to help sell a particular item in the line, and in their eagerness to adopt the new ideas they lose sight of the training program, temporarily, and perhaps permanently.

Executives who report to higher executives, such as district or branch managers, and department managers of retail stores, often find it particularly difficult to give personal attention to training programs which must be conducted over a period of time. They frequently are required by the demands of their superiors to give their time and attention to other matters. It is not that the superiors do not appreciate or approve of training for subordinates; the trouble is that they often are not sufficiently familiar with the programs and thus

don't take them into consideration in guiding the executives who work under them.

Other Reasons for Seeking Help

Though it might seem that an experienced executive should not permit the obstacles just described to stand in the way of accomplishing a worth-while objective, the fact remains that many executives find themselves unable to follow out an extended program consistently, week after week. Some of them undoubtedly could if they would make a determined effort. The others should be able to, perhaps, but experience shows that they don't. One executive, the branch manager of a truck manufacturing concern, summed up the difficulties in this way:

"Frankly, I had to drop that training program because every time the day for the meetings came around, something happened. Two or three times, I just didn't get a chance to study up on the subjects we were to talk about. A customer would come in and take up a couple of hours, or the auditor dropped in from the home office, or there was a big deal to work up. Twice I got called to the home office on the day we were to have the meeting, and another time there was an important meeting at the City Hall. I did my best to hold those meetings on schedule but it seemed as if something unexpected came up every time."

It must be recognized, also, that some executives have so tight a schedule, under normal conditions, that undertaking full responsibility for a training program is clearly unwise if there is any other way out. In addition, there are two other reasons why it may be desirable for an executive to assign responsibility for training programs, and perhaps for regular, current instructions, to someone else:

1. *Dislike for the Job.* Some highly successful men in business lack the persistence needed to stay with an idea and see it through. They are valuable and successful because of their analytical and creative ability and their imagination. When a new idea doesn't work smoothly from the start or when it requires patient, painstaking explanation and follow-up, they lose interest and turn their attention to something new. Granted that they would be more valuable and successful if they would create fewer ideas and stay with the best ones until they made them work, and that they should make every reasonable effort to do so, executives who fall into this category usually cannot or will not change. And until they do change, it is most desirable for them to delegate to another individual the responsibility for seeing that the plans they conceive are put into practice by subordinates.

2. *Lack of Skill with Subordinates.* Many above-average executives do not have the self-control or the persuasiveness or the human understanding

needed to deal effectively with subordinates regarding instructions. They possess other characteristics which enable them to stand out, but fall short in dealing with men. It is obvious that executives who fit this description should seek help with their plans and instructions, unless they are confident they can overcome their handicaps.

The ideal executive should find time to follow through on his plans if possible, should like to do so, and should have an aptitude for that part of his job. However, if he is unable or disinclined, he will do well to face the situation realistically and make other provisions. And the choice of the individual to give the needed assistance, and the methods he uses, merit careful consideration, because responsibility of this sort must be delegated with particular care if it is to be genuinely effective.

Chapter XXI

DELEGATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING

A considerable number of large organizations, recognizing the value of training and the fact that executives can use skilled assistance in coaching their subordinates and in putting their instructions and policies into effect, have employed specialists for that work. Frequently the specialists are attached to the personnel department and are called training directors, or else separate training departments are set up. The training men work with the line organization in a staff capacity; that is, they are not responsible for the over-all direction and supervision of the subordinates, but are charged merely with instructing and following them up along definite lines covered by the training programs.

In other concerns, the responsibility which the executive himself does not assume is passed on to an assistant in the line organization—one who is directly between the executive and his subordinates and directs their complete activities. Obviously, if the assistant is well qualified to handle the respon-

sibility for getting instructions carried out and has the time and inclination to do so, he is the better choice. For he will have the weight of his authority to aid him in dealing with the subordinates.

Too often, however, an assistant is hindered by the same limitations which handicap the executive, in that he is too busy with other work or not well fitted. Consequently, unless the executive is in a position to relieve the assistant of some of his duties or to replace him with another man who can assume the responsibility for instructions successfully, a staff man is the best answer to the problem. And if the right sort of man can be found, a staff training director offers several definite advantages, for he can:

1. *Keep the Program Going.* A staff man is good insurance against permitting training programs or important policies to become sidetracked or forgotten. Where an executive might have to turn his attention to other matters or become diverted by other work, the staff man has only the training work to concern himself with. Even if it becomes necessary to interrupt his work, he can be relied on to get it under way again as soon as possible, because the training is his major interest.

2. *Give the Problem Adequate Study.* A training director is in a position to study the subordinates and their reactions carefully, to analyze the reasons why policies and programs are not accepted prop-

erly by subordinates, and to become thoroughly posted on the technique of getting instructions carried out.

3. *Interpret the Executive and His Policies to Subordinates.* A skillful staff man also can assist greatly in selling an executive to his subordinates. Being neither superior nor subordinate, and having the prejudices of neither, he can play the part of a mediator when the executive or his policies are misjudged, or when the executive makes mistakes in his relations with his men. Any executive is likely, at times, to become stubborn or impatient. His judgment becomes warped by his personal desires or by failure to realize that his subordinates' viewpoints and interests are different from his own. He may become irritated when they cannot recognize what to him is an obvious fact, or he may ask too much of his men because he overestimates their capacities. Every executive makes occasional errors along those lines, and a third party can smooth things over with little difficulty by minimizing their importance and by explaining the executive's side of the situation.

In addition, the staff man can help to make up for an executive's weak points. If the executive has a tendency to be too critical, the training director can soften the criticism by giving praise. If the superior is easygoing, the staff man is in position to supply the additional firmness needed to insure

action. Finally, the training man can advertise the executive's good points, and will find many occasions to do so in dealing with subordinates. A good example of that sort of advertising was furnished by the training director of a large oil company, when a filling-station manager complained that his superintendent had been unreasonable:

"You will have a big job getting your place cleaned up by tomorrow night, but the superintendent was not really being unreasonable at all," he replied. "You remember that he asked you to do the work two weeks ago. You had plenty of time, but let the job go and never got around to it. This is just his way of telling you that he means what he says. You'll have to get busy now, but it's really your own fault. As a matter of fact, he was rather reasonable to let you off so easy. Isn't that right?"

This method of answering the station manager not only helped to remove his resentment but also put the superior in a favorable light.

Whether an executive needs and can afford to add such a man to his staff will depend on the factors already discussed and on the question of expense. An individual qualified to conduct work of this type successfully will deserve a fairly generous salary, and the cost of his services must be measured against the results he can obtain. In a large organization, with several hundred or more sales-

men, the cost per man will be relatively so small that an effective training director could hardly fail to earn back his salary several times over and should be a worth-while investment if there is need for his services.

In a smaller concern, the cost per subordinate of adding a staff assistant to the pay roll may appear high, and yet be fully justified if the staff man succeeds in his function. For in addition to his training programs and follow-up of important instructions, he can assume other duties to lighten the executive's burden of detail.

Every executive who finds himself unable to follow through with his instructions and policies and programs, whether for lack of time or for other reasons, will do well to weigh the cost of this assistance carefully before discarding the idea. Many large concerns have obtained excellent results by turning over training programs to staff men.

Selecting the Right Man

Men qualified to handle assignments of this nature are hard to find, since a rather unusual combination of abilities is required. The training man will need considerably more ability than is required for the usual function of training departments—the training of new employees. Training new men is a relatively easy assignment compared to the task of influencing men already on the job. New

employees usually are more eager to learn, while the veterans tend to feel that they already know their job and hence resist new ideas and any form of teaching. Accordingly, in choosing an individual to help get training programs and other important plans carried out, the executive will want to use these yardsticks:

Experience: It is exceedingly difficult for any man, no matter how intelligent, to train and influence subordinates unless he knows the job they are engaged in thoroughly, as a result of practical experience. The best place to find a training director, therefore, is among the subordinates. And the man selected usually will be a potential executive, inasmuch as anyone with ability to follow through with the particular responsibility in question will have to possess many executive characteristics.

The right sort of man will be hard to find, however, in most organizations. To be taken seriously and to have prestige with subordinates, a man selected from the ranks must have been successful in his job as a subordinate, but merely having been a star salesman is not sufficient. There is nothing connected with the job of most salesmen which makes them good leaders. Indeed, the best salesmen of all frequently are the least effective as leaders, as many organizations have found out. Selling merchandise and selling ideas require quite different types of ability, in most instances.

It may be necessary, therefore, to find on the outside a man with the necessary characteristics and to give him practical experience before he takes over his training responsibilities. For although some exceptional individuals can learn as they go and acquire prestige, the chances are slight. Most inexperienced men, given such an assignment, make so many unavoidable mistakes at the start that they become ineffective.

Tact. If the staff man succeeds in winning the confidence of the subordinates he works with, they will tend to look on him as an adviser and come to him with their problems. They will voice their criticisms of the organization and its policies and perhaps of the executive for whom they work. To maintain the confidence of the subordinates, the staff man will have to discuss these subjects. He cannot dodge them consistently. On the other hand, he usually cannot agree with all the justified complaints he hears because he has no authority to remove the cause for the complaints and cannot afford to place the organization or the executive in an unfavorable light. With proper tact he can, however, place the best possible interpretation on complaints and objections and can divert attention from them, without appearing to avoid the issues.

Ability to Convince. Lacking the prestige of authority, which always is a direct aid in influencing groups of subordinates, the staff man must have

ability to sell ideas strictly on their merits. He can, of course, call on the executive for assistance in getting action from the men he is working with, but if he finds it necessary to do so too often, he will not be of much value on his job. Both in meetings and in individual contacts, the staff man will need the ability to think clearly, to express himself effectively, and to answer objections skillfully.

Ability to Write. Although manuals, correspondence courses, and other written training materials cannot be relied on to get programs adopted by more than a small percentage of subordinates, such materials usually are desirable to supplement personal introduction and follow-up of training programs. And to have any value, the written material should be skillfully prepared. It must be clear and interesting to earn much attention from salesmen and others who get to it only after completing a full day's work.

Over and above these qualifications, the training man will need the same assets that make up a good executive, including the ability to develop respect, confidence, and friendly relations with the men he is working with. The better his understanding of leadership and of human nature, the more certain he is to succeed in his important, but difficult, job. And above all, he will need to plan his program and its execution with considerable care.

CHAPTER XXII

CONDUCTING TRAINING SUCCESSFULLY

Training programs have failed far more often than they have succeeded in the past. However, they have not failed because the idea of training is unsound, but rather because a few fundamental principles have been overlooked. Excepting the cases where the individual responsible for the programs has lacked the time or ability to see them through, the most frequent reasons reported for the failures are these:

1. Failing to tie in executives.
2. Developing jealousy.
3. Overemphasizing individual phases of the job.
4. Failing to show tangible results.
5. Covering too much ground.

It is an easy matter to guard against these handicaps, as many successful training men have demonstrated, but an individual who has had no experience to guide him is likely to encounter serious trouble before he learns their importance.

How to Tie In Executives

A training program or any policy or instruction which lacks the active support of the executive in charge is almost certain to fail, unless it happens to fit in closely with the ideas of the subordinates to whom it applies. Likewise, a program which merely appears to lack his support is just as certain to fail. Subordinates will do many things for their direct superior which they will not do at the suggestion of a staff man who lacks direct authority. Accordingly, it is essential that every training program to be conducted by a staff man receive definite endorsement from the executive, at the beginning, and from time to time later on.

Moreover, if the training director is to receive proper support, he must make certain that the program is fully understood and approved by the executive. It is not enough to get permission from the executive to follow a program which the training man has worked out. The program should be approved in detail, both to make sure that it fits in with the executive's ideas and will not conflict with his own plans and because no executive will show proper interest in a program unless he is thoroughly familiar with it.

When an executive has delegated the job to a staff man in whom he has full confidence, he may be tempted to leave the details to him. But the

training director will find, more often than not, that the executive's interest will be less and his cooperation harder to get if the executive fails to go over the program step by step.

When a number of executives must be consulted in the preparation of a program, as is the case in large organizations with numerous departments, the job of consulting the various department heads, to get the worth-while ideas they can contribute and to reconcile varying viewpoints, may require considerable time. If the program involves the manufacturing, advertising, sales, and personnel departments, and the general manager and treasurer and other individuals as well, a training director frequently is tempted to take a few short cuts in order to speed up his task and get the training under way. But there is certain to be trouble ahead if influential and important executives are not consulted.

Realizing the need for selling and explaining a training program to everyone likely to be interested in it, some training directors spend weeks consulting various executives outside the department for which the subordinates work. Indeed, the training director of a well-known utility concern arranged a five-day meeting of his company's executives before his program started. At that meeting, to which the president of the company invited all executives concerned, the program was reviewed

in detail and differences of opinion were ironed out in advance of the training.

The individual in charge of training for an oil company started off his training activities by giving a part of the course to certain executives, in which he discussed the importance of training as well as the essentials of the program. These men, and many others, have learned that a program of training can accomplish little unless the top of the organization understands it well enough to endorse it and take an active interest in it.

In addition, the executive can assist greatly in gaining acceptance of the program and of the staff man's activities if he introduces the program personally and enthusiastically to the subordinates. An effective introduction prepared for the president of a small loan company, to be made before a group of branch office managers, read as follows:

"I am sure you realize that none of us knows as much about this business as he might. Every one of us here has good ideas which would be helpful to the others. Moreover, if you will look back over the last five years, I am certain you will recognize that we have improved our methods greatly. It is to be hoped that we will make as much more improvement in the future, for if we don't, some of our competitors will step out ahead of us.

"However, our improvement will not come entirely from new ideas. There are many old ideas,

pertaining to the very fundamentals of our business, that we tend to lose sight of as time goes on. I know that every one of you could cite instances where we are overlooking ways to improve our business—ways that we all know about or have heard about, but have forgotten.

"At my request, and with my help and that of many of you, Mr. Ashton has prepared a program which you all will find stimulating and interesting. It consists of some good ideas which we too often see neglected in the everyday conduct of our business and some new ideas which have proved highly successful in some of the branches. You will have an opportunity to discuss these ideas and to add to them.

"Mr. Ashton will conduct the program. I intend to sit in on your meetings from time to time and shall watch results closely," etc.

The president then went on to mention specific ideas which would be covered in the program, thereby establishing his familiarity with it. The fact that he personally endorsed the program unquestionably influenced the group to take it seriously and to accept it more readily.

However, an executive can do still more to aid his training director. In addition to endorsing the program, he can sit in at meetings occasionally and write letters to subordinates repeating and reemphasizing some of the details in the program.

His interest may not contribute greatly to the success of the program, but lack of interest is certain to be harmful.

How to Guard against Jealousy

Results, in the form of sales or profits, mean a great deal to everyone in an organization, and, when any improvement is attained, it is only natural for everyone concerned to feel that he deserves a good share of the credit.

Not only the executive and supervisory staff, but the subordinates themselves are reluctant to grant that the credit does not belong to them. They become jealous when the credit is given to someone else or is claimed by some other individual. Thus, while a staff man should be certain that the executive to whom he reports is made aware of any results he obtains, he will find it best not to claim too much credit for himself or his program in talking with the remainder of the organization.

One way to be sure the program is appreciated, without taking chances on antagonizing others, is to talk about what "we" have accomplished, rather than what "I" have done. Jealousy also can be prevented by keeping the executive and his assistants close to the program and encouraging them to think of it as their own project, rather than an activity belonging solely to the training man.

How to Avoid Overemphasis

Most jobs involve a variety of activities, a number of different phases. A typical salesman, for example, has his regular accounts to sell, his prospects to solicit, and different items to give attention to. In addition, he may have accounts to collect, service or inspection trips to make, installations to check up on, and so on. A store manager is responsible for seeing that his store is kept clean and orderly, and has orders to make out, displays to plan and set up, employees to supervise, and many other jobs to think about. Accordingly, care should be taken not to get his job out of balance by placing too much emphasis on any one phase or part of his work. For his over-all results may suffer while he is concentrating on some one idea, or at best there may be no total improvement at all.

A sales force always can increase the number of new customers obtained by concentrating on new accounts, but sales to present customers may drop sufficiently at the same time to offset the gain in customers, and may drop even more. A striking example of this sort occurred in a chain-grocery concern which assigned three staff specialists to conduct a training program designed to increase sales of fresh fruits and vegetables in sixty stores.

Detailed records were kept over a period of ten weeks and showed that sales of fruits and vege-

tables had been increased 16 per cent, when the trend of sales in the remaining stores had been discounted. Profits from the sale of the fruits and vegetables increased correspondingly. But when total sales and profits of all merchandise, including groceries as well as fruits and vegetables, were analyzed, the sixty stores showed a net loss as compared with the other stores. It was obvious that the training men had placed so much emphasis on the fruits and vegetables that the sale of groceries had been neglected.

The same result has been observed scores of times in pushing the sale of individual items. In the same chain, thirty store managers made outstanding records each week for sixteen weeks in selling extra items to customers. Sales of those items were increased as much as twenty times the normal sale, but total sales of the stores for the sixteen weeks showed a decrease, as compared with other stores in the same organization. Results of wholesale salesmen often have revealed the same tendency.

The effects of placing too much attention on one type of merchandise, and too much incentive as well, were observed throughout a chain shoe-store organization. In store after store, the salesmen were trying to sell arch supports to every possible prospect, because they had been given a highly effective course of training on arch supports, and because

the commission on the supports was more than three times as high as the commission on a pair of shoes. Not only were the salesmen neglecting to sell shoes, but they were storing up future trouble by selling arch supports to every gullible customer, whether he needed supports or not.

The only safeguards against throwing the subordinates' work out of balance are, first, to take care not to place too much emphasis on one idea over a short period of time and, second, to warn the subordinates of the dangers of concentrating too much on one part of their work.

Need for Proving Results

The individual in charge of training must show results, of course, if he is to stay on the job, and usually must show the results in dollars and cents to be sure of getting the credit which is due him. The problem, then, is to make a showing without overemphasizing any one activity.

In addition to taking the precautions already discussed, this can be done and the training program as a whole can be made most effective, by starting with an over-all description of the job and by laying down principles to guide the subordinates in planning their work in such a way as to give the right proportion of their time to each part of their job.

Then, as the training program progresses, gradual improvement will appear in each part of the job, if the training has been conducted effectively, and worth-while results can be established.

Concentrating the Program

The importance of continuous, frequent follow-up has been stressed previously. It was pointed out that results can be obtained much more surely if subordinates are followed up twice a week for six weeks than if they are checked only once a week for twelve weeks. For that reason, a training man usually finds it profitable to divide a large organization into groups, taking in each group only as many men as he conveniently can follow up regularly. Not only will this policy bring better results, but it will furnish another means of proving results, because the improvement in each group can be measured against the showing of the rest of the organization.

The dangers which lie in the way of a training program and a staff man have been emphasized because they are so frequently encountered. The principal reasons why business organizations have made so little consistent effort to train experienced men is because training has come to be considered theoretical by executives who were not sufficiently familiar with the training being done to know that it really was highly practical; because training has

upset organizations by placing too much emphasis on minor aspects of a job; because results were not demonstrated; and because the program was spread over so many subordinates that it couldn't be executed effectively.

Scores of concerns have invested large sums in extensive training programs which never produced results. In general, the content of the programs has been entirely satisfactory but the programs have been presented and followed up ineffectively and unskillfully.

Highly successful training work has been done by staff men in many concerns, however, and the executive who cannot see his way clear to undertake a needed program himself may be fortunate enough to find or develop a training director who can do equally successful work for him. But to avoid the difficulties which have so often come up, and for the other important reasons as well, he will want to keep in close touch with any program conducted in his organization until he has full confidence in the ability of the individual in charge.

Once a competent staff man is located, he can become exceedingly valuable, not only for conducting extensive training programs, but for following up important current plans and instructions as well.

Chapter XXIII

IMPROVING THE ATTITUDE OF SUBORDINATES

ELIMINATING SOURCES OF DISSATISFACTION

Getting a group of individuals to accept and observe individual instructions is likely to be a fairly difficult, time-taking job. The time and effort unquestionably are worth spending, but any means of getting results more easily are, of course, welcomed by executives.

The executive who succeeds in selling himself to his men has utilized one way of making the job easier. For, as has been brought out, subordinates observe instructions more readily for leaders whom they like and respect and have confidence in. Presenting and following up instructions skillfully is another way. There is, in addition, a third way to get instructions observed more easily—by improving the attitude of subordinates toward their jobs.

The failure of men to value their jobs highly has been mentioned as a prominent cause for neglect of instructions. Accordingly, if employees can be influenced to take a better attitude toward their jobs, they will be that much more likely to observe

instructions. They will be less inclined to take chances on imperiling their jobs and more inclined to judge instructions fairly and constructively.

Since the unsatisfactory appreciation of jobs is based on real or imaginary objections, the need is to lessen the influence of those objections. This can be accomplished in two ways:

1. By removing the causes for the objections.
2. By inducing subordinates to overlook the objections.

The first of these solutions is the more desirable, if not always the easier, because it brings a more dependable and permanent improvement in performance.

Removing Causes for Poor Attitude

From the considerable amount of research which has been conducted on morale and employee attitudes, it is clear that poor attitudes—dissatisfaction with jobs—arise principally from these causes:

1. Feeling of unimportance.
2. Feeling of insecurity.
3. Dissatisfaction with aspects of the job.
4. Failure of the company to be successful.

A complete discussion of these causes is impossible here, because there are countless small points which play a big part in the attitudes. As some writers have pointed out, a subordinate's whole

attitude may become soured by so relatively small a matter as transferring him to a new territory, by excluding him from a conference attended by other men of his own rank, or by omitting his name from the company telephone directory or from a list of employees who have shared some honor.

A salesman may dislike the new territory assigned to him, although it will produce more sales. Indeed, he may permit this one grievance to upset him so greatly that he loses all appreciation of the job.

Some of the causes of poor attitudes, of course, are imaginary. Employees often imagine they have been slighted or discriminated against. If such a case is encountered, the executive can remove the difficulty by explaining the situation to his subordinates. In one concern, for example, the rumor was spread around that a new employee was being paid more than any of the veterans on the job. Soon fifty employees had become indignant. The rumor was untrue, however, and when it finally reached the executive in charge, he disproved it quickly by calling in one influential subordinate and assuring him that the rumor was false. As he expected, that employee quickly spread the word around and the dissatisfaction disappeared promptly.

In some instances it is not possible or practical to correct certain causes for poor attitudes, espe-

cially if they are based on wages or other working conditions which the company is not in a position to change. But in most organizations there are causes for poor attitudes, affecting individuals or whole groups, which can be eliminated easily at no cost by minor changes in policy. And since one or two changes may improve attitudes considerably, a discussion of the principal causes is in order.

Feeling of Unimportance

Employees want to feel that they count for something, that their opinions and ideas are valued, that they are "somebody." Most men would like to be their own boss; they dislike being told what to do and how to work. Instructions tend to make subordinates feel unimportant and inferior, whereas they want to feel important. Indeed, that is one of their most dominant desires.

Consulting employees in advance on proposed policies or instructions is one way to build up this feeling. Fortunately, a little consultation may go a long way, and executives find it highly desirable to solicit the views of subordinates whenever it is convenient to do so. It is not necessary, of course, to submit highly controversial subjects to subordinates. Consulting them on proposed policies which they are sure to welcome will serve the purpose, if it is not convenient or does not seem wise to follow the idea on a broad scale. The essential point is to

give them opportunities to make decisions, to help "run the show."

Other ways to build up a feeling of importance among subordinates, some of which have been referred to previously, are the following:

—Let them vote down a new plan or idea occasionally, when they voice a dislike for it.
—Pay close, interested attention to their ideas and suggestions.
—Adopt their ideas and suggestions when possible.
—Give them special jobs to do occasionally which they consider important.
—Bring them in contact with important executives when practicable.
—Talk over their work with them at frequent intervals, just to show interest in them.
—Give them public recognition when they have done commendable work.

It obviously is impossible to make all employees feel as important as they think they are or wish they were, but every gesture in the proper direction is a valuable means of improving their attitudes.

Eliminating Feeling of Insecurity

A feeling of insecurity may arise from rumors of changes contemplated by the management, from

realization or suspicion that things are not going well with the company and that there will be unpleasant developments as a consequence, or from a general feeling of uneasiness based on wrong interpretations of happenings in the company.

Rumors, of course, affect whole groups. They will soon become known to those executives who make it a point to keep in touch with their subordinates and can be counteracted by publicly denying them, by denying them to a few influential subordinates who will spread the word to the others, or by making public announcements which indirectly discount the rumors.

The latter method was used with excellent results by the vice-president of a utility company when he became aware of a rumor that there was to be a general reduction in the size of the sales force engaged in selling electrical equipment direct to homes. Fearing that a mere denial of the rumor would not serve the purpose, he announced at a sales meeting, without mentioning the rumor, that results from this branch of the business had been so promising that the company was considering an increase in the size of the sales force. This indirect denial quickly routed the rumor and the fears of insecurity.

Subordinates make exceedingly farfetched deductions concerning their own future when they learn of discharges, transfers, and similar occur-

rences. Fear is easily aroused in individuals and often spreads quickly through groups.

As an illustration, the territory of a veteran wholesale-grocery salesman was cut in half at the beginning of the year. The man was working on a flat salary and the cut was made to enable him to concentrate on his better accounts. The salesman lost nothing in the change. Immediately, however, other salesmen who were working on a commission basis convinced themselves that their territories would be reduced also and that their earnings would be lowered thereby. Had the sales manager not become aware of the feeling which developed, the attitude of his salesmen unquestionably would have become quite unsatisfactory.

In another sales force, two recently employed salesmen were released for poor results and high sales cost. Four other salesmen who had been hired at about the same time assumed that they, too, would be let out. They had no reason for reaching such a conclusion other than the fact that two other men had been discharged, but that was ample to stir their imaginations.

Praising or complimenting men for their work, when compliments are in order, is an effective way to guard against these fears which arise with the slightest provocation. Subordinates who don't know where they stand or how well they are regarded frequently imagine the worst. Accordingly,

executives find it beneficial to talk over each man's performance with him regularly, telling him his work is satisfactory if no more favorable statement is justified, and thus giving him reason to believe his job is secure.

Every effort should be made to control turnover, especially discharges, of employees. For aside from the fact that an excessive number of discharges is expensive and bothersome to executives, subordinates are sure to be worried when they see large numbers of their fellow employees discharged. A man who is in constant fear of being discharged from a job seldom values that job as highly as he should.

Dissatisfaction with Conditions of the Job

A complete list of reasons why a subordinate or a group of them may be dissatisfied with a job would fill several pages. The most frequent reasons, as brought out by employee representation plans in various concerns and by complaints from individuals, are these:

—Rate of pay or commission.
—Total pay.
—Hours of work.
—Location of territory.
—Expense allowance.
—Lack of future.
—Reduction in size of territory.

—Being deprived of big accounts.
—Inability to get assistance on problems.
—Too much detail work.

These objections have been stated from the viewpoint of a salesman. They apply equally well, however, to subordinates on other types of work. In the case of a truck driver, "location of territory" may mean the route assigned to him; to a chain-store manager, it may mean the location of the store he is placed in; to a waitress, it may mean the location of the tables she serves.

Each of the other points can be translated to apply to almost any sort of job. And some or all of these objections can be found in any group of subordinates if a skillful search is made. Attitude surveys, whether formal or informal, invariably bring out numerous and varied objections of which the management has been completely unaware.

Many of these objections, while valid from the employees' point of view, are not to be blamed on the management. This point is illustrated in the case of a salesman assigned to a territory on the Ohio River. The headquarters city is a most undesirable place in which to live, in the opinion of outsiders who move there. It is almost entirely industrial, schools are inferior, and homes are drab. The average income of the residents is quite low. In short, the city has a down-at-the-heels atmosphere

which depresses newcomers who have lived in more modern and progressive communities.

The salesman in question, who was married and had three children, had been employed only recently. It was quite natural, therefore, that he should be given a less desirable territory. Since he needed the job badly, he should have been satisfied with what he got. But the point is that he wasn't, after the thrill of getting a job had worn off. His attitude soon became unsatisfactory and affected his work. He turned "anti" and after a few months began to dislike his work and to disregard instructions quite generally. This was a case of a potentially good man going to pieces because of a discontented attitude.

The company employing him, on the other hand, wished to be represented in that territory. There was a great deal of potential business. They had no other territory to assign this salesman to and no obligation to assign him elsewhere, because he was, after all, a newcomer of unknown and unproved ability.

Ordinarily, the sales manager would have discharged the salesman and then have tried another new man. But he had been through the same experience several times before and decided to search for another solution.

A trip to the territory—the first the sales manager had made in four years—soon disclosed an

easy answer to the problem. Across the river, still in the same territory, was another, smaller city which was far more attractive to live in than the present headquarters. The local office was transferred and the salesman was persuaded to move his home. The plan worked; the salesman's attitude was reversed quickly and his sales results became entirely satisfactory.

Such an easy solution is not always possible, but it unquestionably pays to eliminate these objections when feasible. And even when it is impossible to change working conditions to which employees object, it usually is possible to explain why no changes can be made and thus alleviate the feeling or perhaps remove it completely. Merely going to the trouble of recognizing a complaint and discussing it freely is enough to satisfy subordinates in many instances.

Objections to jobs which are based on dissatisfaction with hours, wages, and working conditions often can be disposed of by effecting minor changes. Shorter hours sometimes mean a net increase in production. Pay increases which satisfy disgruntled employees often are paid back quickly in improved performance. When a wage increase appears impossible, the direct, immediate cost of satisfying subordinates must be weighed against the indirect, but inevitable cost of dissatisfaction and poor attitude.

Lack of Success

When subordinates feel that the company they work for is unsuccessful they are certain to value their jobs less. In the first place, they realize that unsuccessful concerns have less to offer in the way of promotions, salary increases, and bonuses. They know that there may be changes in personnel, possibly a general pay cut, perhaps a reduction in personnel.

In the second place, and of considerably greater significance, a letdown is inevitable because part of the incentive disappears. There is a satisfaction in being identified with a successful organization. By implication, the individuals who make up that organization also are successful. A job in such a company is more worth while because of the reflected prestige.

But when the tide turns, this prestige disappears and the individual's pride in his association with the organization fades away. There no longer is so much to work for. And when his opinion of his job is lowered, his satisfaction is less, and he naturally lets down.

It is possible, in some instances, to counteract lack of success by one of several methods:

1. Explain the situation away as a temporary matter and show that some of the concern's competitors are even worse off.

2. Point to success which is being achieved along certain lines, to take attention from the over-all condition.
3. Announce plans for regaining success, publish the progress made, and thus establish improvement as the measuring stick of success, instead of black figures.
4. Make certain that executives maintain a confident, optimistic attitude when in contact with subordinates.

One of these devices usually will help eliminate the letdown in attitude. And in every instance determined effort should be made to remove the effect of unsuccessful operation.

Summary

In order, the procedure just discussed calls, first, for determining and recognizing any general or individual causes for dissatisfaction and poor attitude; second, for removing or modifying these causes when possible. Then, if causes exist which cannot be removed or eliminated—and that is the case in every organization—the next step is to influence subordinates to overlook the objections.

Dissatisfaction and poor attitude always are accompanied by disregard for instructions. Improvement in attitude toward jobs always means improvement in the way instructions are observed.

Chapter XXIV

IMPROVING THE ATTITUDE OF SUBORDINATES (*Continued*)

INFLUENCING THEM TO OVERLOOK OBJECTIONS

There always will be objections to every job and every company on the part of every subordinate, no matter how much effort is made to eliminate the objections. That is an accepted, established truth. No one is free from some sort of dissatisfaction. Even the salesman who is promoted to the position of sales manager at double the salary, pleased as he may be, will have his objections. Perhaps he has to keep the treasurer's son as a salesman. He may have to be away from home too much. He may dislike the vice-president to whom he reports. On the whole, his attitude may be exceedingly satisfactory, but it is not perfect. There are some disadvantages connected with his new position.

The more of the objections that can be eliminated from any job, the better the attitude is sure to be. And even if certain of the objections cannot be removed, it is possible to reduce their effect, and thus gain an improvement in attitude. This can be accomplished in four ways:

1. By stimulating enthusiasm.
2. By using well-planned contests.
3. By developing and broadening subordinates.
4. By giving subordinates more responsibility for their methods and results.

Getting Results with Enthusiasm

Whether an executive tries to use enthusiasm as a means of getting instructions observed depends ordinarily on whether he is the enthusiastic type himself. If he is, it is natural for him to create enthusiasm among his subordinates. But the more quiet and conservative leader, who himself dislikes showmanship and ballyhoo, usually goes without it.

To do so, however, is both unfortunate and unnecessary. Most executives who are not of the enthusiastic type have assistants who can fill the role quite effectively. Or they can secure the help of some other executive in stirring up enthusiasm on important occasions. Indeed, executives to whom genuine enthusiasm is not natural need such aid because unnatural attempts to register enthusiasm almost always miss their mark completely.

Enthusiasm is a valuable aid in getting certain instructions or ideas carried out. It is useful principally in calling forth extra effort, which subordinates too often are reluctant to give. Being based

on emotion, it can cause subordinates to overlook objections to an idea and to carry it out blindly. In fact, the emotional appeal frequently leads subordinates to accept ideas which they would quickly reject if they considered them fully. The use of the emotional appeal keeps logic in the background.

When to Use Enthusiasm

As most executives will have observed, the scope of enthusiasm is limited. Ordinarily it is effective only under these conditions.

First, the plan or idea or instruction must be fairly easy to comprehend and apply. If the plan requires much thinking, logic is too likely to replace and dampen the emotional appeal. Thus, enthusiasm is an ideal device for starting off a campaign to increase sales on one fast-moving item in a salesman's line, or to introduce a new item which is sure to be well accepted by the trade. Such a campaign is easy to understand because of its simplicity and is easy to apply because the item sells readily; the salesman is certain to get some results right from the start. Lack of results quickly stifles enthusiasm.

On the other hand, enthusiasm is not likely to work successfully in a drive to get new customers or a campaign to clean up discontinued

or slow-moving merchandise. The new-customer drive will require considerable planning. The salesman knows in advance that the discontinued and slow-moving items will be hard to sell. Only an expert can create real enthusiasm over those campaigns, and even then the enthusiasm may pass off without producing results.

Second, the plan or idea must be one that is to be applied immediately. Being based on emotion, enthusiasm tends to wear off quickly. If the interval between the appeal and the time for action is too long, the enthusiasm usually dies out.

It is for this reason that many executives make it a point to hold meetings of subordinates on Monday. Then they can apply their enthusiasm the next day with a minimum of time intervening. Executives find that if the subordinates can start to work on the plan or idea almost immediately and get results from the start, the enthusiasm may be maintained for a number of days. But enthusiasm worked up at a Friday or Saturday meeting too often will be gone by Monday, after the subordinates have had a day or two to apply reasoning, think up objections, and get their thoughts on other subjects.

Third, the plan or idea must involve the element of competition or definite, desirable

accomplishment. A group of chain-store managers can easily be made enthusiastic about getting a bigger increase in bread sales than another district, or about exceeding a stiff quota set up by headquarters. But they probably could not be made enthusiastic over a campaign to sweep floors more often, or to give truck drivers more help in unloading trucks. The managers would not consider the latter ideas sufficiently desirable. A sales force could become enthusiastic about selling a specified quantity of merchandise at a special price, but not about the broad idea of increasing sales in general with no special aid or inducement. Pride, desire to excel, eagerness to outdo someone else, desire for prestige, are necessary elements in enthusiasm. A subordinate may consider an idea entirely unworthy of his time, or may feel that it is not worth the effort required, but will dismiss or fail to recognize these objections in a desire to show he is better than someone else or to prove that he can accomplish a difficult job.

How to Be Enthusiastic

To inspire enthusiasm in others, it is necessary that the superior appear enthusiastic himself, both because enthusiasm is contagious and is transmitted largely in that way, and because subordi-

nates naturally will not greet with enthusiasm an idea which their leader does not appear to be worked up about.

Since few executives are good enough actors to pretend enthusiasm they do not feel, and since an executive who does not act in a typically enthusiastic manner usually does a poor job of pretending, there would seem to be little need of analyzing the technique of being enthusiastic. However, some executives who have held themselves back for fear of appearing ridiculous may be able to take advantage of this device in the future, and an understanding of the general technique should be helpful.

An individual whom we consider enthusiastic usually performs in this fashion:

—He appears excited.
—He is confident and assured.
—He waves his arms and uses gestures.
—He challenges the group.
—He calls for a verbal response to his challenge.
—He talks loud, then uses a confidential tone, then becomes intense and impressive.
—He expresses full confidence in the group's ability to accomplish the desired objective.
—He assumes, confidently, that they can and will respond to the idea.

In short, he is the next thing to a high-pressure salesman and necessarily must be good to get by

with his methods. His manner and methods and actions are natural to him because he *feels* the way he talks and acts. No one who does not feel that way can act the part successfully.

Some executives have the feeling inwardly and can't show it because of their passive, undemonstrative natures. Others have the feeling but repress it, as mentioned. The latter undoubtedly can profit by experimenting when they have ideas to put over which they feel about strongly.

Executives who have developed their ability to register enthusiasm are able to use it quite effectively even when they are not enthusiastic about the idea itself. For they merely shift their focus and become enthusiastic about the possibility of being able to put the idea over.

A chain-store superintendent illustrated this idea in connection with a week-end sale. "We were obliged, because of an oversupply on the local market, to sell four crates of cauliflower per store, when one crate would fill our requirements fully," he relates.

"I knew my managers would be discouraged because of the probability of taking heavy spoilage losses. I doubted myself whether we could realize our cost. But I had to make the best of the fix we were in. Fortunately, I got an inspiration that enabled me to go to my men with genuine enthusiasm.

"What I told them amounted to this: Other districts we are competing with are getting their share of the cauliflower. Most of them will complain and lie down on the job. Then they'll have heavy spoilage losses; maybe $2 per store. If we brace up and decide to make the best of this, we can keep our losses way under theirs, and get more sales, too. We can make the best showing of all, if we really work, because they probably won't. Let's get after this cauliflower in a big way and . . . "

Unquestionably, the idea of turning a difficult situation into a contest was a happy solution. Enthusiasm then was easy to build. In a similar way, the sales manager who is discouraged by a high quota can become enthusiastic and make his salesmen enthusiastic about accomplishing the impossible, about meeting the challenge of the high quota.

For getting immediate results, enthusiasm is the most valuable device available. It is virtually worthless for a long pull, except to insure a good start on a program. But when a superior wishes to accomplish something "right now" and wants to be sure of success, enthusiasm is his best ally. Plans which would never be accepted on a logical basis can be made eminently successful by effective appeal to the emotions through enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XXV

GETTING RESULTS WITH CONTESTS

Contests usually are looked on as a means for stimulating extra effort, and they do serve that purpose. But they also can be used effectively to get difficult instructions or ideas accepted. Indeed, contests can be so helpful in getting important new plans under way that many executives recommend using them for important new projects only.

Many new ideas are resisted because they are new. Subordinates are unfamiliar with them and do not know whether they have merit or how difficult they will be to carry out. Assuming that the ideas do have merit and that employees will accept them when they have seen results, the biggest obstacle is getting subordinates to try them initially. Contests are ideal for that purpose.

A contest of the right sort appeals to subordinates' desire for prestige. Even though an individual feels he is not likely to win, he ordinarily is interested in making a good showing, in staying away from the bottom in the results. In fact, a contest based on a new idea can succeed in getting the new idea into general use even when subordi-

nates are cool toward it, simply because they don't want to make a poor showing in comparison with other subordinates in a competitive event.

As any executive knows from experience, however, contests are not sure-fire. They have failed more often than they have succeeded because a few fundamental principles have been violated. A great many helpful suggestions, based on experience, have been printed in the trade press. A digest of these experiences indicates that, to serve the purpose of getting instructions carried out, there are two important principles which must be observed faithfully:

1. See that everyone has a chance to win.
2. Prepare results on a comparative basis and make them public.

Disregard of either of these rules greatly lessens the chances for a successful contest.

Giving Everyone a Chance

Unless he feels he has a good chance to win or at least to make a good showing, a subordinate is likely to take little or no active interest in a contest. He realizes that he has no chance of gaining prestige. He may make a halfhearted effort to show up fairly well or he may not, depending on how he reacts.

Thousands of sales contests have failed completely because they were based solely on per cent of sales increase; that is, the salesman who gets the largest percentage of increase in July, compared with May, wins the prize. The salesmen realize, however, even if the sales manager does not, that the winner of such a contest probably will win it by accident. He may be a man who had a poor month in May or one with a low normal sales volume who is lucky enough to land one big order, perhaps an unsolicited order. Or the winner may have a territory where business always increases in the summer months, whereas other territories invariably experience a drop.

Merely weighting the percentages according to results in the same two months of the preceding year would put such a contest on a fairer basis and interest more of the salesmen. Using a three-month base of comparison would help still further by reducing the possibility that the winner would merely be the man who did the worst job in May.

Without going into further detail, it should be sufficient to point out that one vital test question to ask, before a contest is announced, is this: "Does this contest give anyone an advantage over the rest of the group?" If it does, plans should be altered to eliminate the advantage or to give the same advantage to as many men as possible.

Publish the Results

Interest in contests and in the idea on which they are based falls off quickly unless the participants know where they stand and whether they are showing up well. In a one- to six-day contest it may be impossible to compile results during the contest and usually is not necessary, because the determination to win should last that long. But daily posting of results would be helpful even so.

When contests are to last more than one week, progress reports are essential. A subordinate may be working fairly hard and yet well below his peak. If he has no reason to think he is not doing well, he will continue to work at that rate. If, however, he finds that he is well below the top he may be stimulated to considerably greater effort to improve his position.

One of the most successful contests ever held—it ran for a whole year—was conducted by a chain grocery concern. Its success was based, first, on the fact that it was fair; second, on the fact that results were published weekly; and, third, on the fact that points could be won each week, regardless of the past week's performance. The list of points won was as eagerly awaited each week as the outcome of sales results.

Not only should each man know where he stands, but everyone else should know. If the individual is

the only one who knows that he ranks last, or far behind the leader, he is likely to give up. But if he realizes that everyone knows he is behind, he is spurred on to better performance in order to save his face and avoid loss of prestige.

Publication of the results is helpful in any contest, but particularly so in one based on an idea or plan on which subordinates are not well sold.

Increasing Chances for Success

In addition to the foregoing points, the suggestions which follow are stressed emphatically by most executives who are experienced in conducting successful contests:

Keep Them Short. A contest which lasts more than one month and still is successful is a rarity. Interest just doesn't last beyond that point, in most contests, and there is too much likelihood of a few individuals building up an unbeatable lead. When longer contests are planned, it is desirable to hold a subcontest, with separate prizes, for each two- or four-week period.

Avoid Too Many Contests. The success of contests depends largely on their novelty. When one contest follows another, or two or three are conducted simultaneously, contests become commonplace and interest is certain to drop.

Offer Attractive Awards. Opinion is sharply divided on the merit of cash prizes as against cups

or merchandise. Many executives feel that cash prizes are a good incentive if the anticipated results of the contest justify cash awards large enough to be really appealing. The amount required will vary with the normal income of the subordinates. Five dollars might interest a store clerk, while $250 might be needed to appeal to a salesman with a large income.

Trophies, clocks, golf clubs, and similar prizes are preferred when the amount available for prizes is limited. First, because everyone probably would like to have a cup for the mantel where his friends would see it; second, because noncash prizes can be kept on hand as a source of pride long after a cash prize would have been spent. The best test of any prize, however, is: will the men value it enough to work for it?

Make the Terms Understandable. Subordinates must understand exactly what they have to do to win and must know exactly how much credit they will earn for a given accomplishment. When the method of scoring is so complicated that no one understands how the scores are arrived at, interest is sure to be absent.

Provide a Measure of Performance. A contest for department-store salesgirls based on "good service," would create little interest because the girls would not know whether they were doing a good job or an excellent job or a fair job. Setting up a

scale of penalties—two points off for errors in sales slips, four points off for failure to smile, and so on—would provide a tangible measure of accomplishment, a goal to work toward. Effort should be made to express results numerically in every contest.

Guard against Manipulation. One large concern was almost disrupted, and three able executives were discharged, as a result of a contest based on selling five classes of merchandise to new customers. Two different branch offices curiously enough hit on the idea of arbitrarily billing out merchandise to dealers who were not on the books and then instructing the dealers to return the goods to various jobbers whose cooperation had been arranged. Thus, the new accounts stayed on the books of the branches. The plan was so successful that suspicion was aroused and the schemes were exposed. The executives in charge should have anticipated this manipulation and could have prevented it merely by requiring signed orders from all new customers. But they didn't.

Contests based on salvage returns in chain stores easily can be won by manipulation if several managers get together and return all salvage from one store. Contests involving the sale of individual items in chain stores can be won by managers who transfer part of their stock to other stores. All such irregularities can be prevented by planning con-

tests more carefully. With manipulation eliminated, contests will create more interest. Subordinates naturally are not enthusiastic about trying to beat competitors who can and may manipulate.

Offer Several Ways to Win. When a contest is based on both sales and dollar profits, it is likely to appeal to more subordinates than when based on sales alone. Some men feel that they have reached a peak on sales but admit they could trim expenses or sell more high-gross-profit merchandise, and thus win on profits.

The successful contest already referred to embraced five factors: sales, dollar profit, expenses, fruit and vegetable sales, and stocks of merchandise on hand. Thus, there were five possibilities of interesting each individual. The contest, in effect, provided a stimulus for producing extra effort on each of the five factors.

Give the Contest a Name. Football games and horse races may be worn out as themes for contests, but the general idea is a good one. In the first place, the names add extra interest. Second, they make the contest easier to refer to; a name is likely to be mentioned much more often than a collection of rules. Thus, the contest will get more publicity and will be thought about more often.

Since contests must be used in a limited way, it seems only logical to conclude that they should be

utilized primarily for accomplishing important plans and ideas which must have a special stimulus to assure proper acceptance. And experience indicates that subordinates often will continue to follow plans and ideas in which they have become interested through contests.

Chapter XXVI

DEVELOPING SUBORDINATES

Pettiness, stubbornness, narrowness are largely responsible for the objections which subordinates raise against instructions and for their antagonistic attitude toward new ideas. To overcome these traits in connection with each instruction issued is a difficult task. An easier and quicker and otherwise more desirable solution is to change the traits and thus change the individuals' reactions to instructions in general.

Developing subordinates to eliminate those undesirable traits is a definite responsibility of executives, and by some is considered an obligation, since a leader ideally should do all he can to improve the ability and character of men who work under him.

When the number of subordinates is large, however, and when contact with subordinates is infrequent, an executive may be unable to develop more than a few individuals. In such cases, time limitations require that attention be paid primarily to the employees who promise to develop most quickly and to those whose example carries the most weight with other employees. And when the

attention paid to development of subordinates must be limited, the greatest progress undoubtedly can be made by concentrating on two objectives:

1. Broadening the viewpoint of subordinates.
2. Developing an open-minded attitude.

A considerable improvement in the subordinates' general ability, as well as in their attitude toward instructions, can be effected by work along these lines.

Broadening the Viewpoint

Far too many employees confine their contacts to their everyday job, the movies, social activities, daily newspapers, and popular magazines. Their general knowledge of business is limited to what they experience on their jobs, plus a smattering of misleading and superficial information gathered from the other sources mentioned.

Accordingly, it is not strange that subordinates resist ideas and policies which have become generally accepted in other lines of business. The ideas are new to them in spite of their use elsewhere. For example, scientific selling methods have been used successfully in various concerns for the last ten and twenty years, but those methods will be resisted strongly when first introduced in any concern. Salesmen who are out of touch with the business world have no sound background with

which to judge the desirability of such methods. To them, the methods are new, untried, and probably theoretical.

Budgets also have been in general use and their value has been established clearly. But a group of store managers, department heads, or other similar groups of subordinates may fail utterly to appreciate the value of budgets because they are unaware of the favorable results already experienced by other organizations. And they lack the fundamental understanding required to appreciate the value of that form of control.

The chief objective of broadening, then, should be to make subordinates conscious of the problems and methods and experiences of business concerns in the same and other lines. This is accomplished with subordinates, as well as with executives, by:

1. Encouraging them to read trade papers, business magazines, and business books.
2. Sending them to trade conventions.
3. Encouraging them to join businessmen's clubs.
4. Arranging for outside speakers to talk before groups of subordinates on various phases of business.
5. Encouraging them to study closely the methods used by businesses which they contact.

Such contacts are certain to give subordinates a new and broader picture of business and to give them a better background against which to judge new plans and policies.

Whether the broadening should cover general education and cultural improvement depends on each individual's background and future possibilities. Properly planned, this sort of broadening may prove even more effective than any other over a long period.

Developing an Open-minded Attitude

The broadening process, in time, is quite certain to make subordinates more open-minded. They will see ideas they have rejected in the past working smoothly in other organizations and will begin to realize that new ideas deserve a fair trial before they are voted down.

Further than that, the job of making men open-minded is largely a matter of, first, setting a good example and, second, getting them to accept the principle of experimentation.

Carefully guided discussions of proposed policies and programs, in which the leader sets an open-minded example by taking his subordinates through the proper thinking processes, usually will, in time, influence subordinates to weigh new ideas in the same way of their own accord.

Experimentation is an easy principle to sell, for no subordinate consistently will refuse to try new ideas on a small scale. Then, if the executive's judgment has been sound fairly consistently, and the experiments work out successfully, subordinates soon will begin to grasp the idea that arbitrary rejection of new plans is decidedly wrong; that most new ideas deserve a fair trial. Once this attitude is developed, instructions are sure of an improved reception.

Other Ways to Develop Men

In addition, several other means of developing men have been used most profitably by executives who are particularly interested in the subject.

Arouse Ambitions. A leader can create, by encouragement, a desire to get ahead and to take advantage of every opportunity to improve results.

Consult Subordinates. By going out of his way to talk over problems with subordinates, an executive can encourage them to take their jobs more seriously and can impart principles which will guide subordinates constructively in their future decisions and opinions.

Discuss Weaknesses. Frank, friendly discussions of their weaknesses with individuals contribute greatly to their general improvement and help to overcome tendencies toward pettiness, stubborn-

ness, or narrowness. If the comments are fair and constructive, and are presented tactfully, they will be appreciated, and a good share of the subordinates will heed the advice they receive.

Busy executives have only a limited amount of time for work along these lines. But when it is realized that every minute spent on developing subordinates helps directly to assure more complete acceptance of future instructions, and thus to increase profits and build up the superiors' personal prestige, it becomes apparent that executives are fully warranted in giving this work a maximum amount of attention.

Chapter XXVII

GIVING RESPONSIBILITY TO SUBORDINATES

"If they'd only let me alone, I could accomplish something on this job. I get so many instructions I can't get anything worth while done."

Hundreds of executives have repeated those thoughts in their own words, referring to what they considered excessive supervision or instruction from their own superiors. It is not strange, therefore, that subordinates, who customarily receive more supervision than executives, should share the same feelings.

Almost everyone in business tends to believe that he could do a better job, if left more to his own devices, than he can accomplish when someone above him dictates his methods and the plans he works under. Whether the superior is a foreman, supervisor, sales manager, vice-president, or board of directors, the wish for more freedom on the part of those down below is uttered, or thought about, often.

Moreover, it unquestionably is true that instructions do tend to hamper subordinates and to interfere with their plans for getting work done. The

plans which subordinates work out are not always sound by any means, but frequently they are carefully thought out, and instructions which interfere with those plans then become quite undesirable. Thus, when an intelligent salesman has worked out a systematic plan for calling on customers who he believes are ready to place repeat orders, he is at least partly justified in complaining if he is instructed to get five new customers within two weeks or required to sell a quota of discontinued merchandise within a short, specified time.

Aside from the factor of interference, there is no doubt that some men work more effectively and more profitably when given a goodly amount of freedom than when their work is closely supervised and their methods of working are controlled by instructions. Most executives have seen examples in the case of younger executives who have been put onto a responsible new job with little or no instruction and guidance. When these individuals have been wisely selected, they often begin immediately to surpass expectations, to do better work on their own responsibility than they ever did under supervision. And, of particular importance, men who are permitted to work largely on their own responsibility with a small or minimum amount of supervision and instruction frequently do a better job of following instructions than they formerly did.

When the burden of accomplishment is placed on a subordinate, instead of his superior, he soon begins to seek help. Usually he realizes that he doesn't know so much about running his affairs profitably as he thought he did. Good ideas, or ideas which may be profitable, then become valuable, and he is more inclined to give them a fair trial. He begins to look for help, instead of resisting it.

Men who are promoted to executive positions will be observed advocating policies and instructions which they disregarded completely when they were subordinates themselves. Their attitude changes when they become directly responsible for results. Much the same change may take place when individuals in subordinates' positions are placed largely on their own responsibility. While they will receive fewer instructions as time goes along, they will pay more attention to those they do receive and will observe more closely the instructions they received but disregarded in the past.

Selecting Men for Responsibility

Thus, the granting of responsibility actually becomes a means to stimulate better performance on a limited number of instructions, and can effect a substantial improvement in a subordinate's results even though he is given fewer ideas to help him. If he is capable of assuming the responsibility,

he will have additional ideas of his own which will add to his effectiveness on the job.

Experience shows clearly, however, that responsibility cannot be handed out indiscriminately, for two reasons:

> *First*, some men cannot work well without supervision.
> *Second*, other men can, but are not prepared to do so.

Many subordinates are completely incapable of planning and managing their affairs. They can produce reasonably satisfactory results under the direction of a superior but become quite worthless when left to themselves. Laziness and lack of ambition are responsible for some of the failures; lack of balance or poor judgment handicap other individuals. These men are likely to be the same ones who mortgage their future earnings up to the limit through installment buying. They are the type who buy expensive automobiles when they cannot afford to own a low-priced used car.

In some instances, they completely lack the imagination and initiative and aggressiveness which are indispensable in the acceptance of responsibility. In other cases, they may have had the inherent ability to develop a sense of responsibility but have worked too long under close supervision to be able to work independently later in life.

Experience, however, is vitally important, for no subordinate can successfully accept responsibility for his methods and results unless he knows his job well. Accordingly, a man with limited experience should be given time to learn his job before responsibility is offered to him, or he must be instructed carefully in advance, or time must be allowed to permit him to learn as he goes, after the responsibility is granted. Giving a subordinate too much responsibility for a job he doesn't know well is sure to be a costly experiment and may spoil a promising man.

Preparing Subordinates for Less Supervision

Responsibility cannot be given out wholesale to groups of subordinates without encountering serious trouble. Some concerns have experimented with a general reduction in supervision and results have been almost universally disappointing. When supervision in the past has been less effective than the average, results may not change appreciably for some time and may remain permanently on about the same level; indeed, a few subordinates may improve their work and a few will let down, the over-all results remaining approximately the same. But when reasonably effective supervision is relaxed, the usual result is distinctly unfavorable. A skilled executive contributes greatly to the results of his men, and too many of them miss the assistance when it is withdrawn or reduced.

On the other hand, surprising results have been obtained by giving greater freedom and responsibility to selected individuals. In one chain-store organization, where a plan for placing certain store managers on their own responsibility was introduced, a substantial number of promising men failed to accept the responsibility, but a good many other individuals accepted the challenge more successfully than had been anticipated. In the latter group were quite a few men who had been considered "hard to handle." They were the individualists who had been wanting to think for themselves and took full advantage of the opportunity.

Some men kept their stores cleaner than ever before; some managers became more particular about the type of service their clerks gave to customers. A few men immediately introduced undesirable methods and neglected important phases of their jobs, but the general tendency among the selected managers was to become more thorough and progressive.

There seems to be no larger number of experiences on which to base a sound program for giving responsibility successfully, because the process ordinarily has been informal and unplanned. However, from the few cases which have been observed, the following steps seem unquestionably to be important:

1. Sound out the candidates carefully.
2. Have an understanding about policies.
3. Discuss the principles involved in the job.
4. Set a goal or quota.
5. Avoid the temptation to supervise.
6. Handle difficult cases skillfully.

Giving responsibility to subordinates requires far more than just relaxing supervision and issuing fewer instructions. Improvement can be assured only through sound planning and management.

• *Sounding Out Subordinates*

The best selections for the delegation of responsibility will not necessarily be the individuals who have been producing the best results. Indeed, the most satisfactory response is most likely to come from men who have been doing mediocre work—subordinates who have been doing a poorer job than they could do because of their dislike for instructions and for supervision.

Mere dislike for instructions, however, is not enough to qualify a subordinate for more responsibility. He must have, in addition, a latent desire for accomplishment and a fund of workable ideas. And the best way to determine whether an individual subordinate meets those specifications is to talk his job over with him, thereby drawing out his ideas and getting a picture of his general attitude.

A simple question, such as "What's the matter with the used-car business, Henderson?", will give the subordinate a chance to state his ideas, both good and bad. If his comments are mostly negative, he probably will be an unwise choice. But if he has good ideas and a thoughtful approach to his problems, he shows promise of being the right type.

A conversation about the job, or the business in general, presents an opportunity to size up the individual and his understanding of his job as well. Then, if the subordinate appears to measure up to the requirements of the plan, the executive can sound him out in about this way, along the lines one experienced sales manager recommends:

"You have a lot of good ideas, Dawson, and you deserve a chance to use them. After all, there's no reason why I or anyone else should have to map out every move you make. From what you say, it looks to me as though you know better than I do how often to contact your better customers and how much time you should spend out in your country territory. The company isn't interested in seeing you go through a certain set of motions or follow any certain routine. We want results, in terms of sales and profits and a healthy development of your accounts.

"We have been trying to give you helpful assistance, in the form of instructions, but we may have been underestimating your ability to work things

out for yourself. How would you like to take over more of the responsibility for the way your territory is run? Could you turn in more profit, sales expense considered, if we left more of the details up to you?"

The subordinate's answer to the offer, together with future developments, should determine just how much responsibility can safely be given to him.

Settling the Matter of Policies

It must be made clear to the subordinate, right at the start, that the granting of responsibility does not mean that important policies can be disregarded. Every business has established policies which are vital to its success. In general, credits must be approved by the credit department, because subordinates seldom are in position to obtain the necessary information about the financial standing of customers. It may be desirable to permit a salesman to approve his own credits up to a certain maximum, but it seldom is feasible to turn over that responsibility completely.

Prices must be maintained in most lines of business; accounts must be paid on time; every salesman must do his share in moving overstocks; and so on. A distinction between policies and instructions is essential, and the subordinate to whom responsibility is given should be impressed

with the need for observing policies closely. Indeed, strict observance of policies should be a definite condition of the arrangement.

Discussing Principles

The less supervision and instruction a subordinate receives, the more necessary it becomes that he have a clear understanding of the underlying principles which determine success on his job. And since few individuals have learned to think in terms of principles, a review of those which apply to the particular job is virtually indispensable.

Principles are the basic, fundamental rules which govern a job and determine success. They differ from ideas, in that they apply generally, on all occasions, and have a greater bearing on accomplishment. Thus, "Talk to the general manager over at the factory; he's the man who decides where they place the order," is an idea, and "Always deal with the man who actually approves the orders," is a principle. Since salesmen and other subordinates ordinarily are not familiar with principles, and will be receiving fewer ideas when they are given responsibility, it is important that they be made familiar with the necessary principles right at the start.

The salesman who thinks in terms of principles such as "Talk about what the prospect needs and wants, not about what you want to sell him," and

"Plan your presentation before you get to the customer," is far better able to take responsibility successfully than the man who has nothing but a collection of ideas to guide him. For he knows the basic rules and is in a position to reach accurate decisions and work out sound plans.

A discussion of principles offers an opportunity to discuss the whole of the job the subordinate is engaged on. It will serve as a review of all he has learned about his work, and in addition will prompt him to ask questions about points on which he needs help. The discussion need not take the form of a lecture, and in fact can be quite informal, but it should not be omitted.

Setting a Goal

When giving responsibility for a job on which the results are measurable, a quota or budget calling for improvement is most desirable. Setting a goal serves as an incentive to replace the urge formerly provided by the closer supervision. However, the quota should not be dictated by the executive, but rather should be set or at least fully agreed to by the subordinate himself.

The executive should take care not to encourage or accept a quota which is beyond reach. The tendency of many subordinates is to make extravagant commitments, either because they want to make a good impression or because they become overly en-

thusiastic about their ability. But an unattainable quota only tends to discourage the subordinate when the time comes to appraise results. The executive can handle the situation tactfully in this manner when a subordinate becomes too optimistic:

"That's aiming pretty high, Walter. I believe you will be able to do that much business eventually on this territory, but hardly this year. Let's cut that figure down about $20,000 and then aim higher next year. Do you think you can reach the lower quota without fail if you work along the lines we talked about?"

Reducing the Amount of Supervision

The granting of responsibility requires that the amount of supervision be reduced and that fewer instructions be issued to the subordinate. But it in no sense means that supervision should be discontinued, for the subordinate not only will need a minimum amount of checking but will want help and advice from his superior, sooner or later. To be certain that the employee's feeling of responsibility is not impaired, it is desirable that three rules be observed by the executive:

1. *Contact the Subordinate Less Often.* Close and frequent checking tend to encourage the subordinate to continue leaning on his superior for help, instead of building up the feeling that the job is on his shoulders. The executive can continue to check his

work closely by means of reports but will need to suppress the temptation to follow up too frequently. Especially if results start to fall off, the impulse to step in and work closely with the subordinate should be resisted. For the subordinate quickly will get the impression that the talk about responsibility was meaningless. In short, contacts between the executive and subordinate should be maintained definitely, but on a less frequent schedule.

2. *Supervise with Suggestions and Questions.* The first trip around the territory with a salesman who is on his own responsibility usually discloses many chances for improvement, but the number of instructions must be kept to a minimum. Better results will be obtained in the long run if the executive, instead of saying, "This is wrong; do it this way," confines his remarks to questions or, if necessary, to suggestions. If a salesman, for example, has been neglecting his smaller customers, there is no need for the executive to mention the fact. Instead, he can ask, "What plans have you made for keeping in touch with your small accounts while you are working on these larger deals?" The question serves as a reminder, but will not be interpreted as interference with the salesman's responsibility. Then, if the salesman has given the matter insufficient thought or if his plans are unsatisfactory, the executive can pass his ideas along in the form of suggestions.

3. *Avoid Criticism.* Until the subordinate has had ample chance to demonstrate his ability to work on his own, his results should not be criticized. If his showing becomes less favorable, he should be permitted to correct conditions on his own initiative. Criticism is certain to destroy the feeling of responsibility, and is not needed if the responsibility was extended wisely. It should be sufficient to furnish the subordinate his results, permitting him to make the necessary analysis of his standing.

Responsibility is a partial substitute for supervision and cannot endure if too much supervision is continued. Subordinates will make mistakes when they start under the plan, but will profit from them if given the opportunity to work their own way out most of the time.

Handling Difficult Cases

A certain percentage of subordinates will fail to accept responsibility, no matter how carefully the men are selected. And since the withdrawal of responsibility is certain to have a detrimental effect on most of the men who fail, every possible means should be utilized to make that action unnecessary. The first step, recommended by an executive who has met with considerable success in giving responsibility, is to have a talk with the man about his problems, without indicating that he has failed:

"I ask the man to tell me how he is getting along on his territory. If his results have been poor, he knows it as well as I do and usually will ask me for help. If he pretends that he is getting along smoothly, all I need do is ask a few questions about details and he soon admits to me that he is having trouble. As soon as the man admits that, we are in position to talk, but I have not had to tell him that his results are unsatisfactory.

"He usually asks me for advice. If not, I ask him whether he needs any help. Then I get an opening to talk over his problems and show him how to straighten out his difficulties, but the man doesn't feel that I have interfered or criticized him."

If one or several talks of this sort do not lead to improved results, the only alternative is to increase the amount of supervision and begin to issue more instructions. And most executives agree that, when that step becomes necessary and responsibility is withdrawn, it is unnecessary and unwise to advise the subordinate that such action has been taken. Rather he should be permitted to realize it and adjust himself to the fact gradually, thus reducing the blow to his pride. Only if he raises the question does it appear desirable to notify him that his status has been changed.

Giving Responsibility Gradually

The various steps just advocated in the process of putting subordinates on their own responsibility

could be carried out in a few days' time and possibly should be, in some instances. For the most part, however, there is much to be gained by making the change more gradually. The executive then can take plenty of time in sizing up the men he has tentatively selected and can test them out on a limited scale before bringing the subject up. The superintendent of the chain-store organization previously referred to chose that plan and was glad he had done so, for several of the men he had selected definitely eliminated themselves.

The method he used for testing out the candidates consisted of sending a letter to each of his store managers. The letter read about as follows:

"It has been my practice heretofore to remind you of certain regular, routine jobs which need attention every week. That has taken up a good share of my time which could be used more profitably in other ways. Accordingly, I have summarized the routine on the enclosed sheet, which I suggest you post in a prominent place in your store. You then can refer to the schedule each week and be reminded of the work just as effectively as though I mentioned it to you.

"If you have any suggestions regarding the schedule, I shall be glad to discuss them with you. Otherwise, I shall assume that you accept responsibility for getting each job done, regularly and at the proper time."

The response to this test was generally favorable for the first three or four weeks, but soon more than one-third of the men whom the superintendent had been counting on demonstrated clearly that they could not be relied on to accept responsibility. They ignored the plan even after several forceful reminders. Thus, the test saved the superintendent the trouble of experimenting at greater length with subordinates who undoubtedly would have failed to measure up.

Other executives, and they represent the majority, give responsibility in a much more informal manner without making any explanation to the individuals. But that method too often fails because subordinates do not appreciate what is happening and do not respond the way they otherwise would. The more definite understanding is preferable, because the chief benefit from giving responsibility arises from the feeling of freedom which the subordinate experiences. The right sort of man welcomes an invitation to guide his own affairs and endeavors to live up to the opportunity. He follows carefully the few instructions he does receive because he wants to retain the responsibility which has been extended to him.

Chapter XXVIII

THE NEED FOR COORDINATION

Higher up executives who adopt certain of the methods discussed in the preceding chapters are certain to experience better results with their plans and instructions in the future. It must be recognized, however, that their effectiveness will be influenced directly by the extent to which executives farther down the line—particularly those in direct contact with subordinates—use similar methods.

No one will dispute the fact that poor leadership and ineffective or wrong methods of issuing instructions on the part of intermediate executives will nullify the good methods of higher executives or at least reduce their effectiveness considerably. Accordingly, it is just as important for a top executive to encourage the adoption of good leadership technique by the executives below him as it is to adopt sound methods himself. Assuming that the individuals in question are good material to work with and that friction has been eliminated in the group, as discussed in earlier chapters, there are three ways by which the higher executive can bring about the use of better leadership methods by executives below him and thus improve his own results as leader:

1. By setting good examples and waiting for intermediate executives to appreciate and gradually imitate them—a slow and uncertain procedure.
2. By urging them to study the technique of leadership and getting instructions carried out—only a partial solution at best, since many businessmen cannot be relied on to study thoughtfully or thoroughly.
3. By conducting, formally or informally, a series of discussions designed to encourage thinking on the subject and to stimulate interest in effective, constructive methods of leadership.

The more closely line executives, from top to bottom, can be induced to think alike and work alike, the more coordination there will be. And without coordination down the line, good methods on the part of the top executive are sorely discounted by the time the subordinates are reached.

Organized efforts to teach better methods, however, will meet considerable resistance, whether open or concealed, for a variety of reasons:

First, most executives think they already are good leaders. They often are unaware both of their own shortcomings and of the possibilities for improvement.

Second, they hesitate to admit that they could improve, if they are aware of the fact, for fear of reflecting on their ability.

Third, personal habits are hard to change and habits are at the root of the leadership problem. Even with the best of intentions, habits can be changed or adopted only after conscious, continuous effort.

In view of these obstacles, top executives or other executives who have assistants between them and subordinates should follow these generally accepted principles of management in dealing with this problem:

1. Single out the most pronounced leadership weaknesses of each individual.
2. Analyze carefully the characteristics of each man and his probable ability to adopt new methods and to change old ones.
3. Set out to introduce each individual, one at a time, to the improved methods he should and can adopt, keeping the number of specific points to a minimum at any one time in order to facilitate maximum attention to each.
4. Discuss with groups of executives points on which they can be improved collectively,

going slowly enough to insure understanding and to guard against starting more than the executives can apply at one time.

In such a program, it is wise, as experience has demonstrated, to avoid the impression that the individuals are being "taught" something. Everyone agrees in the abstract that teaching and learning are desirable and necessary. But few adults, especially when they are labeled executives, care to feel they are being schooled. It hurts their dignity.

Far better results can be obtained in most concerns by introducing the various subjects informally into conversations and group discussions or by presenting them as friendly advice or suggestions.

Perfection is as unlikely in the handling of instructions as in any other phase of business. Fortunately, however, from a realistic point of view, observance of the principles of good leadership is now so slight, compared with what it might be, that improvement on a few important points is sure to mean a distinct improvement in results with instructions.

Indeed, close observance of a few major principles, such as fairness, interest in subordinates, and friendliness, frequently overshadows an executive's leadership faults and enables him to stand out far above other men with whom subordinates compare him.

Some instructions are sure to fail completely; some will be observed only partially. But the more ideas and plans an executive can get carried out, assuming his instructions are sound, the more profitable his results will be. For ability to get things done is more than half the battle in business.

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